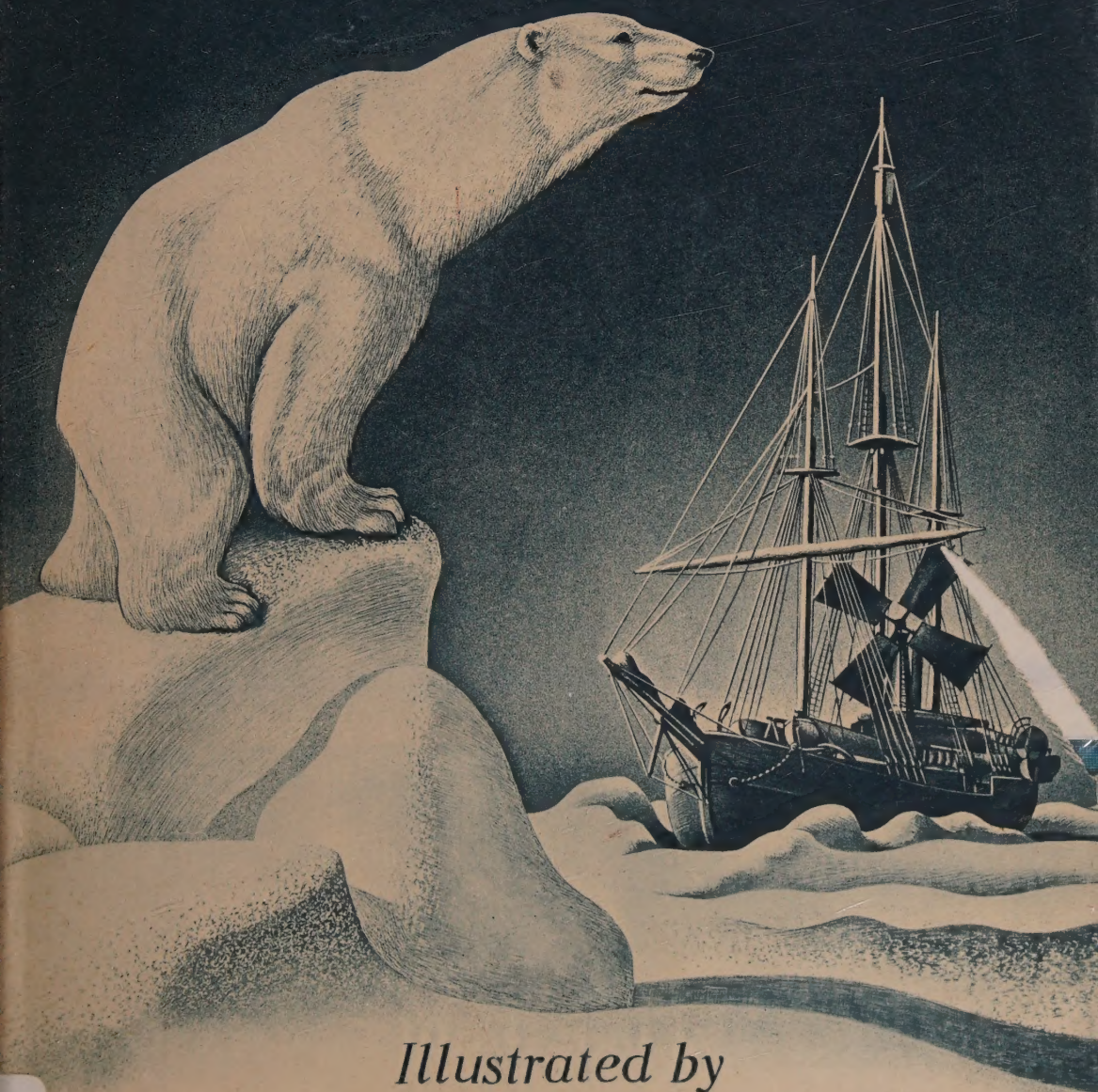


ANNA GERTRUDE HALL

NANSEN



Illustrated by

BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF

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By Anna Gertrude Hall

Illustrated by
Boris Artzybasheff

Fridtjof Nansen died in 1930, ending a life full of honor and accomplishment all too soon, for there were still things left unfinished for others to carry on. His name is one of the greatest among all our contemporaries, and it is one of the ironies of fate that he himself should not be alive today and still continuing, with all his boundless energy and initiative, his great work for science and humanity.

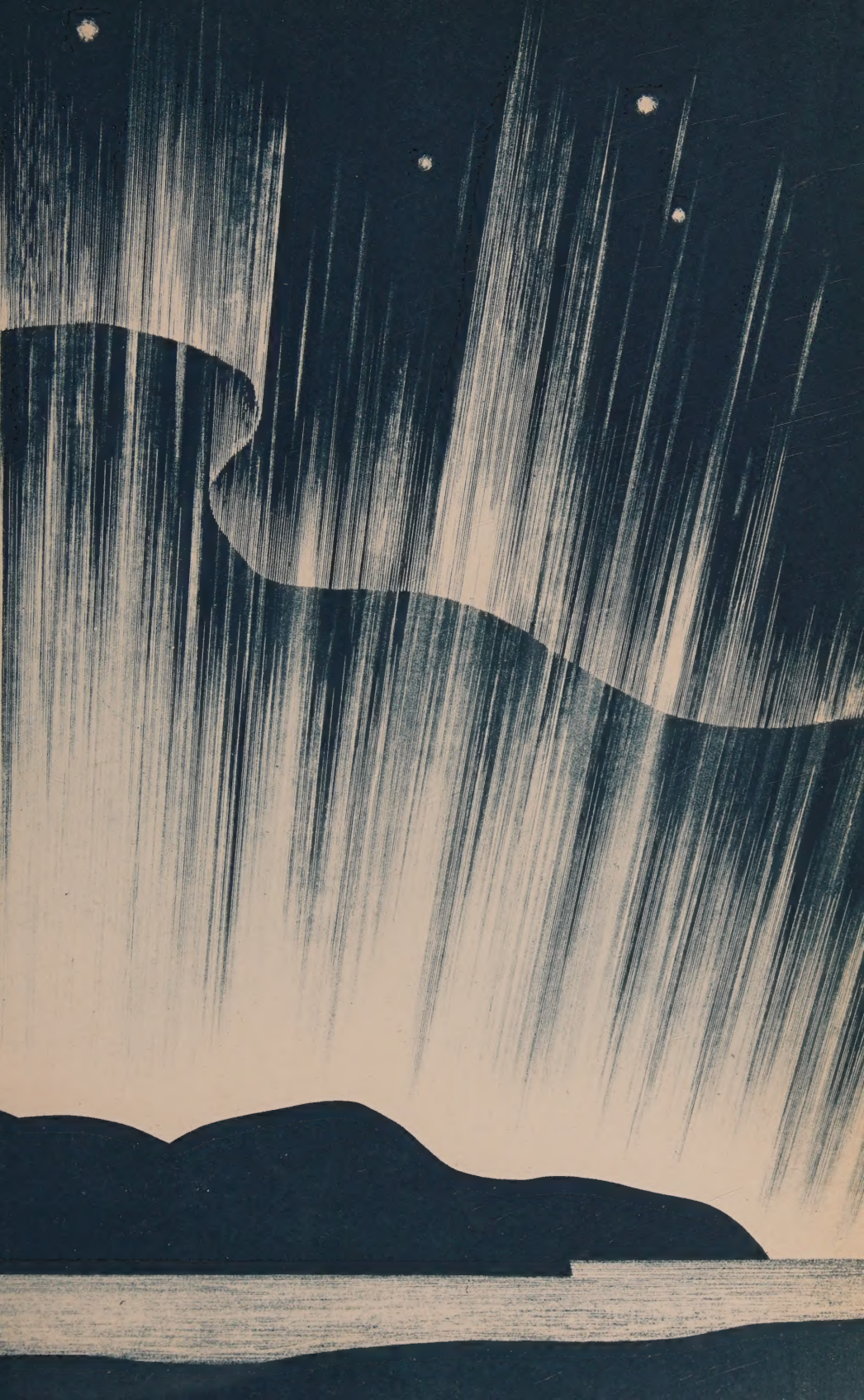
"He was scientist, then explorer, scientist again, and lastly statesman," the author writes. "Possibly there was no plan, but certainly there was a purpose in Fridtjof Nansen's life, something within him that urged him always to use all the powers he had. If he seemed to change his course, it was in every case to do a greater thing, not a smaller."

The qualities of fearlessness, concentration, discipline, so apparent in him even as a young boy, grew with the man throughout his life as explorer, scientist, statesman. This book is adventure of the most exciting kind: the life of a man who will grow into a greater and greater hero as you read.

THE VIKING PRESS







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BY ANNA GERTRUDE HALL

ILLUSTRATED BY
BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF



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To Fritz Wartenweiler

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On three mountain ridges of Norway, three giants once stretched themselves to rest. Two hundred years had passed by, when one giant opened one eye and said: "I hear a cow lowing." Three centuries later the second giant opened both eyes and said: "You are right, it is a cow." Five hundred years rolled by, and the third giant turned his head and grumbled: "How can anyone rest where there is so much chattering going on?"

—Norwegian Folk Tale.

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*They steer beyond the evening star,
And challenge their own dream
To overtake the things that are
Behind the things that seem,
And do not care if death should be
The price of curiosity.*

—HUMBERT WOLFE, "The Explorers."

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When our thoughts go back through the ages . . . an endless procession passes before us . . . a procession of struggling, frost-covered figures in heavy clothes, some erect and powerful, others weak and bent so that they can scarcely drag themselves along before the sledges, many of them emaciated and dying of hunger, cold, and scurvy; but all looking out before them towards the unknown, beyond the sunset, where the goal of their struggle is to be found. . . .

—NANSEN, *In Northern Mists*.

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I see valleys and mountains, woods and green meadows, fields where the golden grain stands ready to be cut. This glorious land is mine. I want to live, to give it of my best powers, which I feel are still lying unused, waiting for an opportunity. I see farther ahead a new world to be built, and I want to build it.

—FRIDTJOF NANSEN.

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I seem to have been waiting all my life for the great idea for which my life was to be a struggle, the idea which was to strike down upon me like a flash of lightning. I have had a premonition of it now and then, but the great flash has never come.

—FRIDTJOF NANSEN.

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*Cattle perish,
Kindred die,
Thou wilt die also,
But one thing I know
 which will never die,
The honor which thou hast won.*

—Hávamál.

NANSEN



I. THE BOY ON SKI

IT was called Foldenfjord in the days when Viking ships thrust out from its shelter for trade and plunder. Farms flourished in its fertile valleys and fishing boats were busy among its wooded islands. A city grew up at the head of the fjord, and was named Oslo. A fortress, the Akershus, was built where the Aker River joined the fjord, and the ships and trade of all Europe came and went in the harbor. In the days of King Christian IV, a fire swept through the city's wooden buildings and laid them in ashes. King Christian built a new city across the river, close under the Akershus, and named it in his own honor, Christiania. The city grew rich and comfortable and important, stretched out its streets like fingers, as cities do, and gathered in the remnants of old Oslo and made them part of the new city. Three hundred years went by while Danish and Swedish kings ruled over Norway, until at last the city was the capital of a free and independent state, and the new government gave back to it its old Norwegian name of Oslo.

When Christian V was king of Denmark and Norway, there was a certain Gustav Wilhelm von Wedel, Count of Jarlsberg, who was made commander-in-chief of the Norwegian army. He was set to repairing the ancient fortress on the cliff and to building a line of forts against the Swedish

border. And in those same times there was a burgomaster of Copenhagen, named Hans Nansen, who had been a trader on the Russian coast, an explorer in the White Sea, and a prosperous merchant in Copenhagen. When Swedish armies besieged Copenhagen, and later when revolution rose within the city itself, the wit and courage and good sense of Burgomaster Nansen helped to defeat the enemy and to bring peace to a distracted nation.

Two hundred years later, on the tenth of October 1861, a descendant of these two men was born in an old-fashioned farmhouse on the West Aker Hills above the city of Christiania, and was named Fridtjof Nansen.

It was a glorious place for boys, that farm of Store Frøen, with its big, comfortable house, its garden and courtyard inside the green and white painted fence, with horses and cows and geese and chickens, with views of fjord and forest and mountain, with a rushing trout-stream close at hand, and, best of all, with the wild and secret stretches of the forest of Nordmarka close behind it.

And it was a lively and interesting household that surrounded the blue-eyed, shock-headed Fridtjof as he grew up. There was his mother, Adelaide Wedel Jarlsberg Nansen, tall, stately, capable, always busy in garden and house, even making all her sons' suits until they were eighteen, yet finding time for reading and study. There was the father, Baldur Nansen, the lawyer, slender, precise and gentle in manner, firm and honorable in character, and deeply beloved by his family; a true gentleman of the old school. Besides Fridtjof's own brother Alexander, a year younger than he, there were

older half-brothers and sisters, for both his father and his mother had been married before. They were a strong and lively crew, those Nansen children, used to plain food and simple living, and hardened with life and sport in the open country.

Outwardly Fridtjof was most like his mother, tall and large of frame, with strongly marked features, and boundless energy. He inherited from her also a love of outdoor sport, the courage to do what he thought best, and complete indifference to what other people thought about it. As he grew older, he showed more of his heritage from his father, a gentle manner, thoughtful sympathy for others, a careful, accurate habit of work, and a rock-bound firmness of character.

We have only glimpses of the home life at Store Frøen, of Christmas trees behind closed doors, and a houseful of children wild with excitement, of hurried drives to the city through the Christmas snow on the last forgotten errands; of boys by the fire on winter nights with their noses in *Robinson Crusoe* or Asbjørnsen's Norwegian fairy tales; of young fishermen barelegged in the icy Frogner River, with their bait of worms in their turned-up trousers legs; of Fridtjof with a fish hook caught in his upper lip, pale but tearless while his mother cuts it out; but there is an air of happiness and warm affection over it all, so that Fridtjof could write when he was a man, with a homesick longing, of the "unspeakably dear and happy home."

Fridtjof was three years old when one day Martha Larsen, the housekeeper, showed her mistress a little woolen coat with a hole burned up the back.

"There he was, Fru Nansen, leaning over his cart and hammering at the wheel with all his might, and his coat so ablaze that I had to pull it off him and throw it on the ground to keep him from burning up. And not for a minute did he stop working on that wheel. He said he thought I was taking care of the fire all right and he had the cart on his hands."

"But how did his coat get afire, Martha, out there in the middle of the courtyard?"

"He had been in the wash house with me just before, and I suppose a spark from under the wash boiler must have flown out and caught in his clothes—it wouldn't blaze up right away in that thick wool—and then I looked out in the yard to see him with a tail of smoke and fire rising up behind, and his head down under that cart. The shout I gave you could have heard in Christiania, but he never even looked up."

"When Fridtjof is interested in something, he can't be interrupted—he must always see it through."

"And when he is thinking about something, he forgets even to eat. Yesterday morning he sat on the floor with one stocking on and the other in his hand, and just stared in front of him without a move or a sound. The boys made fun of him, but he just sat there, until I had to shake him and tell him it was time for breakfast."

February in Christiania, and the Market Fair was open! Open with booths and stands filled with toys and cakes, with shooting galleries, and jugglers, with streets filled with crowds on holiday, with country people in gay costumes, with hundreds of things for little boys to buy and see and enjoy. And

Fridtjof was eight and Alexander was just a year younger.

"Fridtjof, you and Alexander may go to the Fair together today by yourselves and spend this money just as you please."



It looked like a fortune to them when they put together all that Father and Mother, uncles and aunts and grandparents had given them, but they counted it carefully and talked seriously together as they went down the long road to the city. It was tools the two boys wanted, and it was tools they bought, choosing soberly and carefully the best hammer, plane, and bits that their money would buy, and then turned their backs on the Fair and hurried home to get to work.

"Home so soon! And all their money spent for *tools*! Oh, give them more money and tell them to go back and have a good time!"

So back they went with more money and bought—more tools!

The Nansen boys were always trying out new things, and Fridtjof was worst of them all. He it was who tried to hunt squirrels and sparrows with bow and arrows like the Indians

and, when that failed, tried shooting them with a gun which he crammed so full of powder that it burst and peppered his face with powder grains that had to be taken out with a needle. It was Fridtjof who took his mother's sewing machine to pieces to see how it was made, and who did not rest until he had put it together again. It was Fridtjof who always wanted to understand all about everything, and who asked so many questions, so continually, so persistently, that one friend said: "It made us absolutely ill."

It was Fridtjof who made himself some ski from pieces of old ones that had belonged to his older brothers and sisters. They were pretty crude and not even the same length, but he could stumble about on them a little and hope for the day when his father would think he was old enough to have a good pair and would let him go to Huseby Hill for the races. Perhaps next winter!

"You're beginning young, Fridtjof! But where did you get those ski?" It was the voice of their neighbor, Fabritius the printer, who lived beyond them.

"I made them," said Fridtjof. "I know they aren't very good, but I couldn't find any better pieces."

"Let me see them, my boy." Fabritius leaned from his sleigh to look at the truly remarkable ski. "Now, I tell you that a boy who wants ski as much as that should have some good ones. I'll get you a pair myself. Not this winter—the skiing is almost over now—but you wait!"

Spring and summer went by, when no one could ski, not with the best ski in all the world; but when the frosts of autumn began, Fridtjof stood in the road and called out

when Fabritius came driving by: "How about those ski?"

Fabritius laughed. "You'll get them, all right."

But Fridtjof could not risk his forgetting, and every morning he stood by the road to say: "Now, how about those ski?"

But winter finally came, and with it a long, long parcel for Fridtjof, "From your friend, Fabritius." Beautiful lacquered ski of ash they were, red with black stripes, and with a blue lacquered staff and disk. Fridtjof used them for ten years.

Huseby Hill was the highest of the hills about Store Frøen, and was in plain sight of the house. It was on Huseby that the skiing matches were held before the great course at Holmenkollen was laid out. The little boys were allowed to ski on the smaller hills, but were warned to keep away from Huseby. The day came, however, when Fridtjof could not resist any longer; he must try his new ski on Huseby. He did very well at first, making his leaps, with most of the others, from a level stretch half-way up the hill, but after a while he saw a few of the older boys taking off from the very top of the hill. Now, there was something more to try, and up he climbed to see what he could do, for Fridtjof always had to try anything he saw someone else doing. He started for the take-off at a furious speed, soared through the air for what seemed to him like a long time, and then suddenly caught his ski fast in a snow bank. There they stuck, while their owner shot away through the air in a great arc, and came down head foremost with such force that he bored into the snow to his waist. There was dead silence on the hill for a moment, for the boys were certain he must have broken his neck. But shouts of laughter soon echoed from all sides as the young

champion, quite unharmed, came crawling out of the drift.

Some time later he entered a skiing contest at Huseby and won a prize, but would not take it home with him because he had seen men from Telemark with a new style in skiing, using no sticks, but keeping their balance with their well-trained bodies alone. He felt that, until he could learn to ski like that, he had not earned any prize at all.

When they were only boys, Fridtjof and his brothers were experts on ski and won many prizes. The Christiania Ski Club often used Store Frøen as its starting point for forest trips, and the older men welcomed the boys on the trips long before they were old enough to become actual members of the club. Fridtjof loved all sports: swimming and boating in summer; skating, skiing, and tobogganing in winter. When he was only seventeen, he won the Norwegian skating championship, and at eighteen broke the world speed record on the ice. But most of all he liked skiing, not only for the fun of the races and contests and the trips with the ski club, but also because it opened to him the wild and solitary beauty of the Norwegian winter forest. The forest of Nordmarka, which lay almost at his door, was little known in Fridtjof's boyhood, and seemed always to beckon to the Nansen boys, who had explorer's blood in their veins. From the time Fridtjof was twelve, he was allowed to explore farther and farther into its depths, sometimes with older brothers, sometimes with an old countryman called Ola Knub. So little was the forest traveled in those days, that often when they were out in winter they would find undisturbed the ski tracks they had made weeks before. In winter the forest was a place

of silence—all sounds muffled by the snow that covered the ground and hung thick and soft on the trees—no sound of bird or wind, the air clean and sharp and fragrant with pine, the distant mountains white against the dazzling blue of the winter sky. What wonder that a quiet, sturdy boy loved to slip over the snow, among the trees, silently, alone on ski, thinking his own deep thoughts, and feeling more than he could ever put into words? “The solemn pine forest,” he wrote many years after, “marked my soul for life.”

In spring and summer there were fishing trips in the forest, and in autumn hunting for hare. Perhaps there were trolls in the clefts of the lichen-yellowed rocks, as the country people said, and nixies under the foaming waterfalls, but at least the boys learned that there were grouse and black cock in the heather coverts and plenty of salmon and trout in the ice-green streams. In spring, wreaths and banners of mist rose from myriad waterfalls to cling to the tree-dark mountainsides. In summer the sun beat hot on the forest and filled the air with the odor of pine and fir. In autumn the heather bloomed pale red on the rocky slopes, and birch and aspen foliage shone like beaten gold against the green-black pines. At all times, Nordmarka was peaceful, remote, a place for freedom and adventure, a place to live your own life in.

A friend describes the holidays in the forests, and we wonder that the boys had any energy left for school when one of these was over. “‘When the oak leaf is like a mouse’s ear the trout will jump for the fly.’ . . . At this time, that is to say, at the end of May, the three young fishermen would set out from Store Frøen as soon as they had swallowed the last

mouthful of their Saturday dinner, carrying in their wallet some bread and butter, a piece of sausage, and a little coffee. First came a five hours' tramp—not making for any house or farm, but straight for the river. Their goal once reached, not an instant was to be wasted on rest. They did not even stop to eat, but had out their fishing rods and cast away as long as it was light. At the darkest of the night, an hour or two of rest. For supper, coffee and fish broiled on the embers. Then they would creep into a charcoal hutch for an hour's nap, or else sleep under a bush. Then to work again at peep of day. A short rest at noon, and at it once more—oftentimes up to the waist in the river. There they would stand till well on in the evening, and then trudge homewards at night with their shoes full of sand and water. In the small hours of Monday morning they would reach home, tired to death. . . . But when they had had a good sleep, the fatigue was forgotten, and there lay the shining trout on the kitchen table. . . . The hardship was even greater as the autumn advanced and the nights turned cold. The tramps, too, became longer when the boys grew big enough to take part in the hare-hunting at Krokskogen. This involved going for long intervals quite without food, and there would often be scarcely an hour's rest to be had for the better part of two days and two nights. They used to get so hungry that when they happened to descend upon Sandvik railway-station they cleared the refreshment counter of everything eatable in the twinkling of an eye."

As Fridtjof grew older there were even longer trips in the summer, and mountain climbing in the rugged, dangerous

glaciers of Jotunheim and Romsdal. So much of Norway is mountainous, solitary, and sternly beautiful that there was plenty of room for adventurous young men to have difficult and dangerous trips at any time of year. Besides these there was boating on the fjord, where one could dart in and out among the wooded islands and promontories, or, in spring, could venture out of the fjord among the sheltering skerries of the south to watch for the first birds returning northward.

In their outdoor life, Fridtjof was a great trial to some of his companions, because he cared so little about what he ate or where he slept, and because he seemed almost never to be tired. When the others carried packs of food on their backs, he strode along unburdened, with only a sandwich in his pocket. Once when it was time to eat, he opened his jacket and pulled out pancakes warm from being carried next his body, and laughed at his friends when they were disgusted with such a way of providing a warm meal. A box of matches and a fishing rod were all the equipment he said he needed to spend several weeks in the forest. Even when he was sixty-five, he said in a lecture to young men: "How perfectly unnecessary many of the 'necessities' are! . . . Mind you, by making your baggage train longer, you clip your wings." Probably at first it was only a boy's impatience with delay and the weight of equipment and his eagerness to be on his way, but later it became a real effort to train himself to endure all sorts of hard conditions, to eat all sorts of food, and to make his way in wild and lonely places with the least possible baggage.

The Nansen boys went to school in Christiania, walking



two miles each way daily between Store Frøen and the Aars and Voss private school. In winter they left home long before daylight, for they lived near the Arctic Circle, where the winter sun rises late. Sometimes they went through rain, sometimes through snow. Often they would leave clear sunshine on the hills, to drop down into one of Christiania's grimy, freezing fogs. On crisp winter days they would see the walls of the houses in the city glistening with frost like the Ice King's city. They would find the streets deep in snow, and the city people darting about over them in queer little one-horse sleighs, with canvas sheets fastened in front to shield their faces from the hard pellets of ice and snow thrown up by the horses' hoofs. They would see country people in big sleighs like wooden boxes on runners. They might see the king's fur-covered sleigh with its high-stepping horses under their white netting.

In summer, when the days were long, they would go swimming in the fjord before they went home. And in both winter and summer, like all the boys of Christiania of that time, they fought their way to school in the city streets, through gangs of warring boys from different schools and different neighborhoods. They were good, vigorous fights, too, sometimes with stones as well as fists.

The Nansen boys were not interested in the quarrels that went with the fights, but if fighting was to be done, they were ready with both fists, and Fridtjof especially could put a whole gang to flight with the fury of his charge. By his second year in school, he was known as the strongest and best fighter in his class, and ruled, rather cockily, over the

other boys. But a new boy came to the school, who was named Karl and who was also good with his fists and used to ordering other boys about. It was not long before Karl and Fridtjof had to settle the question of who was to give orders on the school grounds, and fell upon each other with lusty blows. They fought until they were both bleeding and almost out of breath, before one of the teachers arrived, took them by their collars, and set them down in an empty class room. "Now sit there and look at each other and be ashamed of yourselves." There is nothing to prove that they were ever ashamed of themselves, but they looked at each other and began to talk. An hour later, their teacher found them sitting with their heads together over the same book as if they had been friends all their lives.

They were friends for the rest of their lives, that is, as long as Karl lived, for he died in middle age. During their school days they shared many adventures and enthusiasms. One of these enthusiasms, when they were about fifteen, was for chemistry, with its eternal invitation to all boys to mix things together to make something new or strange. They had managed, out of their allowances, to get together some chemical materials, and a friend lent them a mortar for mixing, with the warning that they should be very careful with it. Delighted, they retired to the attic of Karl's home, where they filled the mortar with all sorts of chemicals about which they knew very little, and poured and stirred to their hearts' content, until it became so dark they needed a light. One scratch of a match, one spark flying over the mortar, and the whole mixture blazed to the ceiling, and the attic room was filled

with fumes and smoke. Out of the window they hastily dropped the mortar to smash in a hundred pieces on the stones below, while the contents made a most unsightly streak down the side of the house. The two young scientists wasted no time or tears on the broken mortar or the wasted chemicals, but hurriedly streaked their faces with soot and sulphur and threw themselves on the floor, so that Alexander, dashing upstairs to see what had happened, would think they had been killed, or at least stunned, by the explosion.

When he finished high school, Fridtjof entered the University of Christiania, the only university in Norway, and one with a history especially interesting to him because his own great-uncle was the principal actor in it. Count Herman von Wedel-Jarlsberg was Norway's greatest Statholder, or Governor, and its last under the Danish rule. He was a sturdy, honest, and courageous man, who believed his duty to his king was to govern Norway wisely and well, and not merely to squeeze taxes from it for the Danish king and his nobles. He defended the poor Norwegian farmers from the great landowners and continually insisted that Norway's money should bring her better schools, and above all her own university. He was so bold in making his demands, and became so popular among Norwegians, that he soon had enemies at the Danish court, especially among nobles holding estates in Norway on which they had always done as they pleased until Count Herman became Statholder. The king was a weak and timid ruler, easily swayed by anyone who had his ear. Into that ear the Danish nobles poured their

suspicion, more, their certain belief, that the Statholder was a traitor to the throne, that he was stirring up Norway to rise against Denmark and to become independent. Indignant, the king sent a message to Christiania, demanding Count Herman's immediate appearance at the court. Both the king and the nobles were sure that the guilty man would either flee from Norway at once or else go into hiding in some mountain farm, and that they need never see him again.

But Count Herman, with a good conscience and no fear of any man, caught the same boat that brought the king's summons, and appeared the next day in the palace in Copenhagen, ruddy, cheerful, and confident. "You sent for me, Sire?" he said, looking clear-eyed at the stammering, astonished king. For a moment the king was at a loss; he could not accuse this upstanding man to his face of being a traitor; it would take someone with more courage and less sense than he had to do that. But in the last split second, he had an inspiration.

"Yes, yes, my dear Statholder, I sent for you. I think it is time we talked about a university for Norway."

A year later the University of Christiania was founded. Whether or not the Statholder understood the king's predicament, we can only guess.

As a college student, Fridtjof was a well-known figure on the streets of Christiania. He had grown very tall and straight, athletic, well knit, quick and graceful in movement, dressed usually in tight-fitting wool sport clothes, and rarely wearing an overcoat even in the worst of the winter. He was fair, but his face soon became weatherbeaten, and lines came between

his brows and around his eyes from exposure to sun and wind. His hair was fair, straight, and a little unruly. His eyes were dark blue and deep set. He had a simple friendly manner and a very winning smile. On the surface he seemed entirely the athlete and the sportsman, but he was much more than that. Beneath all this hardening of his muscles and toughening of his endurance, there was a very gentle heart that loved home and family and friends devotedly, and that responded to beauty in nature, in music, in poetry.

We know less about his inner life in his youth than in his later years when he revealed himself in his diaries, but we know from others that he loved especially Norwegian poetry and music, and that he could recite page after page of both Norwegian and English poets. One friend wrote of him at about this time: "Rarely does one find in a man of that age so deep a love and desire for what is good, right, and pure, and rarely, too, such a dauntless energy in following it to its remotest consequences." Wherever he went he made friends, and, once made, they were always his friends. In all the open story of his life, we have no record of a quarrel or a grudge. He could be irritatingly stubborn and persistent; he could become so absorbed in some idea or plan that he would forget everything else; but he was so sincerely warm-hearted and generous that his friends were devoted to him.

As a student he did good, honest work, especially in science, but nothing that seemed particularly brilliant. His instructors said that he might have done better, and probably they were right, for his deepest interest was in science, and the university's science department was still poorly equipped.

His mind was always busy with questions of his own that neither teachers nor textbooks could answer, and that seemed to him more important than the problems of the class room.

Perhaps the most difficult problem of his college days was to decide on his life work. He was fairly certain that he wanted to follow some line of scientific research, but did not know how to choose among his many interests. At least he was free to choose without considering whether or not his choice would bring him much money, or whether thorough preparation for it would be expensive. His family was well-to-do, and he himself did not care for wealth or position, but only to live plainly and comfortably and to work hard at something big enough to seem worth while. It was not his fault, nor the fault of the university, that years went by before he found exactly his own kind of work, for the science of oceanography was only in its beginnings when he was a student, scarcely had a name as yet, and was not taught anywhere.

From the sciences he knew about, he finally settled on zoology, the study of animal life, as his especial field. He confessed years later that he made this choice because he thought it would give him more outdoor life than either physics or mathematics, which he greatly preferred. The first move he made after graduation, however, was an unconscious step toward his own future field of work. One of his instructors suggested that, as a beginning in the methods of research, he take a trip on a sealing vessel to the Arctic Ocean, and make notes during the voyage on winds, ocean currents, ice drifts, and animal life. On March 11, 1882,



Nansen sailed on the *Viking* for the arctic ice pack and the breeding grounds of the saddleback seal.

They had a stormy start, and for the first week the young scientist learned all about seasickness and about not much else. When that was over, he was on deck, eager to see and understand everything that went on and to put down everything in his diary, from the glorious colors of the arctic skies to the kinds of knives used in cutting blubber from seals. Sealing vessels were rough places, and sealing crews were

even rougher, but Fridtjof enjoyed himself thoroughly. He could eat anything, and sleep anywhere, and he liked all kinds of people, especially men like these, who worked hard, faced danger with a laugh, and who liked hunting polar bear as much as he did. After years in school, he felt that he was seeing real life at last, the rough, dangerous life of Norway's thousands of fishermen, sealers, and whalers, and he threw himself into it with boyish zest.

This voyage was the starting point for many things in Fridtjof Nansen's life. His diary, for one thing, begun on this journey and kept up during nearly his whole life, was a record not only of what he saw and did, but also of his thoughts and feelings. Many of his books have been drawn from his diaries. *Hunting and Adventure in the Arctic*, published years later, tells the story of the voyage on the *Viking* very much as he wrote it in his diary at the time.

For the first time, too, he saw the vast polar ice pack, heard the grinding of the floes as they broke away and floated out to sea, and saw the strange white reflection of the ice fields on the sky above. ". . . In the north these clouds were brightened from below by a white shimmering glow which stretched from the north right across to the west. Though it was brightest down by the horizon, it was visible up to the zenith. This was the reflection of the white ice fields upon the banks of clouds above them." He was to see that ice-glow, and hear the grinding of the floes many times in his life after that voyage.

The strange cold beauty of the Arctic made a deep impression on him; he was always struggling to express it in

words, or to catch it with his pencil or with his water colors.

"The nights are quite light now. The sun went down after 9 p.m. and whilst it moved round to the north below the rim of ice, the whole northern sky was resplendent with changing hues. . . . One or two purple clouds edged with gold floated low down upon the sky. And higher up a pale green tint melted into the faint blue of the vault of heaven. All around us the white ice-floes drifted across the dark shining face of the water. Those near at hand showed colors—green below the water, and blue at the edges, and ultramarine in the hollows. All these colors seemed so unreal, so delicate, so pure. And as far as the eye could reach stretched a limitless white plain of drifting ice, bounded by a dark and limitless ocean. One lonely ivory gull sailed across the vast pale vault. . . . Then the big black head of a seal rose noiselessly above the shining surface of the sea, gazed with wide-open eyes at the ship, lifted up its nose, and sank down again as noiselessly as before. This was indeed the realm of infinite solitude. . . .

"Most people would be wearied by the stillness and silence of Nature and the limitless ice-fields. They would feel lonely and helpless. . . . But he who seeks for peace in Nature, changelessness and freedom, will find here what he wants."

There was plenty to do on board the *Viking* besides gazing at moonlit ice-fields and arctic sunsets. There were all those thermometers and strange instruments that so puzzled the crew, the dip nets trailing in the water over the side of the ship, and the microscope in the cabin, to keep the young student absorbed and busy. There were notes to be made of

every kind of seabird that soared about the ship, of all the changes of wind, of temperatures of air and water, of all the dredgings from the dip nets, of the course of the ship and its drift when in the ice, of the ice itself, and of how wind and water worked on it. And when the ship finally reached the breeding grounds of the seal, there were notes and drawings of the seals and their young, studies of what they ate, of how they developed, and of how they lived on the barren waste of ice.

After the voyage was over, Fridtjof wrote:

"In the eyes of the sailor-men I was a rather mysterious person, and they puzzled their heads a good deal over all my queer notions, such as rummaging in the insides of seals, bears, and birds, taking the temperature of the sea, fishing up samples of water, and doing many other equally useless things.

"One day the carpenter asked the captain: 'What's he going to be, that there Nansen?'

"The captain, who found it rather difficult to explain, suggested that I would probably become a naturalist.

"But the carpenter didn't think anyone could make a living out of being a naturalist. 'No, I'll tell you what,' he said, 'he can be a vet.'

"'Why?' asked the captain.

"'Well, I've noticed he's a rare hand at cutting up animals.'"

One thing this voyage proved very clearly: that Fridtjof Nansen's scientific research would always be more than the mere collection of facts, that his eager mind would continually use those facts as the springboard for his own star-

tlings theories and daring experiments. Two things he found on this voyage started him on a course of thought and action that he followed through all the rest of his life. One was just a bit of driftwood on the ice. It was some sort of pine; had it drifted on the Gulf Stream from some place on the coast of North America? That did not seem quite possible; the Gulf Stream might carry a bit of wood northward, but it was not likely to help it climb on a cake of ice. No, this wood came from some coast where ice formed close to the shore and caught driftwood from the streams. Norway had pine, but its coast was ice-free. There were no trees on Greenland, Iceland, or Spitsbergen. Siberia was the only place it could have come from. But what current brought it from Siberia to the ice pack off the coast of Greenland? Did the polar ice pack move from east to west? from Siberia across to Greenland? How far north did it drift? Did it perhaps touch the North Pole?

Even more strange than the driftwood was the dirt, like fine dust, on some of the ice-floes. Dust, in a world of ice and snow and deep salt water! And in some places where the ice had melted a little, there were bits of mud and slime that smelled, just a little, like the slime on rocks in fresh-water pools. Fridtjof gathered scrapings of this dust and slime to take back to Norway to show someone with more knowledge and a stronger microscope than he had.

Very little was known about the ocean currents when Fridtjof Nansen sailed on the *Viking*, especially about those in the arctic region. Everyone knew the warm Gulf Stream that swept the shore of Norway, making the coast ice-free

and the land far warmer than any other land lying so far north; but no one knew where it went from there. And they knew the polar current, sweeping down from the north heavy with ice and veiled in fog, making Greenland and Spitsbergen frozen and ice-bound regions. But where did it begin? And what course had it followed? Like patterns on the surface of the globe, these great currents swept on, always the same, never changing in the memory of man. What made them move? Was it the spinning of the earth on its axis? Was it the winds? Was it the different temperatures of different parts of the earth? Before many years went by, Nansen had answered some of these questions himself; others are still being answered by scientists all over the world, who still use facts he gathered, instruments he invented, and theories he proved, as the foundation of all their work.

After a stormy and tedious journey, the *Viking* at last reached the breeding grounds of the seal. Seals were wanted in those days not only for their beautiful skins, but also for their fat, or blubber, which was made into oil. Baby seals until four weeks old are covered with a coat of long white wool which makes the fur beneath softer and more valuable than it is after molting. They are also very plump, with a thick layer of blubber under the skin. Since "white coats," or baby seals, will not go into the water, they are easily killed by clubbing as they lie on the ice. The older seals were shot with rifles. The skin and blubber were removed with knives, and the carcasses were pushed into the sea or left on the ice-floes. It was a bloody business, distasteful to the young man. As Fridtjof wrote in his diary: "On the whole it is a trade

that has no ennobling influence on the emotions of men."

As Fridtjof was earning his passage on the trip by helping with the sealing, he was put in one of the sealing boats, where he proved to be such a good shot with the rifle that he was made leader and gunner of one of the boats. This was another "first time" for this voyage, his first experience in charge of a piece of work with other men under him. He was very young, this was his first sealing trip, yet here he was in charge of a boat crew of men all older than he, who had been sealing every summer for years. It would have been very easy to have had trouble, but Fridtjof always knew how to work *with* rather than *over* the men he was set to lead, and he got along swimmingly. From this voyage until the day of his death, he had men about him who worked gladly under his direction. One man who often went with him on exploring expeditions afterward, said of him: "As a leader, he was a good companion, yet never lost the place of authority. He worked under the same conditions as his comrades, never spared himself or took special privileges, but worked harder than anyone else."

Late in June the *Viking* was caught in the ice near the east coast of Greenland, and Fridtjof climbed to the crow's nest on the mast to look at this wild, unknown land, locked behind its belt of impassable drift ice. He could see the mountains, with glaciers and barren crags, and stretches of snow fields beyond, shining in the sun. It was still unexplored, uncharted; no one had set foot on that coast except a few Eskimo. What an adventure it would be to explore those valleys, climb those mountains, look across those snow fields

where no European had ever set foot! What might be found behind those ragged mountain peaks? There might be more mountains, or sheltered open valleys; there might be rich minerals in the rocks, or fertile land in the valleys. Norden-skjöld, the great Swedish explorer, had thought there might be open land and milder climate in the interior. The Eskimo said it was a land of ice and death, with ice giants playing at ball among the Northern Lights. How could one ever know unless one went there?

For three weeks the ship was frozen fast in the ice, and drifted slowly with it southward along the coast of Greenland. It was lost time for the shipowners, for there were no seal in the solid ice pack, but it was a glorious opportunity for hunting polar bear. Day after day they saw bear, and Fridtjof had many exciting chases across the ice, dodging among hummocks, leaping over stretches of open water, even lying on his stomach in icy pools, waiting for chances to shoot. It was exciting sport, for polar bear are not easily killed by bullet wounds, and an angry, wounded animal could kill a man with one blow of its paw. Fridtjof himself shot fourteen of the great white animals, after many thrilling chases over ice and through water, and some very narrow escapes.

At last, however, the ice opened and let them out into the open sea, where they could head back to the green shores and pine-covered mountains of Norway. These had been only a few months away from home, but they had been spent in an entirely new world, had helped make a man of a school boy, and had decided the course of his life for years to come.

II. THE MAN ON SKI

WHEN Fridtjof reached Christiania, his father and Professor Collett were at the dock to meet him with exciting news. Doctor Danielssen, head of the Bergen Museum, had telegraphed, offering Fridtjof a place as curator of the natural history collection in the museum, and wanted him at once. It was a flattering offer, for he was only twenty, was just out of university, and had done very little work in his chosen field ; it was also a great opportunity, for the Bergen Museum had an excellent collection and Doctor Danielssen was at once a thorough scientist and a fine character. It was hard to leave his father, who had lived in Christiania since his mother's death several years before and who was in poor health, but such offers did not come every day, so Fridtjof hastened to accept.

Bergen, on the west coast of Norway, is a picturesque old city set above a beautiful harbor. Behind the red tiled roofs rise the dark green hills, and above these, the seven mountains, steep, rocky, and gray. It is one of the rainiest places in the world, and there is a saying that a Bergen horse shies only when he sees a man without an umbrella. There is also a story that a Bergen sea captain once returned from a voyage to find the sun shining on his native city, and was so sure he was in the wrong harbor that he turned his boat about and put out to sea again.

The gloomy, rainy weather and the soft air were a great change for Fridtjof Nansen, used to the crisper air of Christiania and to the long season of snow. The life too was a change; a room with a quiet family for his home, and long days in museum and laboratory instead of the sport and good-fellowship of college life. Now the young man who had decided on zoology, because it would take him out of doors, spent his days in a laboratory, bending over a microscope. Instead of hunting bear, he was searching for animal life so small that it could be seen only through powerful lenses. Just as when he was a boy, he went at every problem with his whole heart, and if anyone said a certain question was difficult, or seemed impossible to solve, he wanted to try it at once.

It was not conceit, or even self-confidence. He did not think about surpassing others, or of proving his own powers; he simply had to work at something difficult—he had so much energy, he felt it pouring through his veins, tingling in his muscles, surging in his mind. If he was to work at all, he must work hard. The problems he chose for research were some of the most difficult in all zoology; scientists with years of experience hesitated to attack them, but young Curator Nansen bent his blond head over the microscope day after day, experimented with new ways of staining sections, collected specimens, and studied vigorously, determined to make up for the years he lacked. It was always the search itself, not the result, that led him on.

For nearly six years he stayed in Bergen—"lonely years" he called them in his diary, but very busy years. With one

piece of painstaking research after another he earned a name among scientists over the world. Offers of other positions came to him, several of them from universities in the United States, but none of them was just what he wanted. In fact, he was not sure just what he wanted, but until he knew certainly he would not leave Bergen. There was always that feeling that he was not yet on the right track, that his own work was waiting for him if he could but know what it was.

In 1886 he studied in Italy for several months, spending most of the time in Naples, where there were a laboratory and an aquarium for the study of marine animals. Sunny Naples, the blue Mediterranean, the fun of student comradeship, after the long sober months in his cramped laboratory, gave him new life and brought to the surface again the liveliness and laughter that had been a little subdued in rainy Bergen. He was the gayest of the gay, the best dancer, the merriest companion, ready for any excursion or frolic, so running over with health and spirits that he could not even enter the laboratory by the door, but must always swing himself in through the first-floor windows. Impulsive and generous, he was forever giving away all the money in his pockets to the hungry, ragged beggars of the Naples streets. There is a story that once a friend went with him to help him buy a coat, but, by the time they reached the tailor's, the money for the coat had all been given to the beggars on the way. Yet at other times he would fall into deep reveries and would sit for hours gazing before him, neither hearing nor seeing what went on around him. Into what depths his spirit withdrew, no one could tell, but without doubt some-

where in those silences he forged an armor of courage and patience for the years to come.

The months of study and of contact with other students from all over the world sent him back to Bergen with new spirit for his work, while the use of the great aquarium fired him with a wish to have something like it in Norway. It was vastly more interesting to study living animals by watching



them through glass, than by using only stuffed or bottled specimens as he did at Bergen. In Padua he studied a new method of staining slides of the central nervous system of animals, for he planned to come up in Christiania for his doctor's degree in a year or two, and intended submitting as his thesis the results of studies he was making.

Back again in Bergen, his life was not all work. There was boating along the beautiful west coast of Norway with its many islands and tremendous fjords, deeper and narrower than the Oslo Fjord. There were holiday trips away from the mists of the coast to the snows and clear air of the inland mountains. One trip on ski has become famous and is often retold; it was in February when he went over mountains

from Voss to Oslo on ski, took part in a skiing match on Huseby Hill, and came back over the mountains by the most dangerous route, with no companion but his dog. He knew the route in summer, but the winter snows covered or changed familiar landmarks, and he lost his way among the deep valleys and chasms of the Hallingskeid. Twice he made his bed in the snow under a sheltering boulder, with his dog curled beside him, and with no covering but his light coat, and slept as peacefully as at home. At times he descended into valleys so steep that he carried his ski and used them, with his staff, to hold him as he went down the snow-covered precipices. Sometimes he tried to follow streams through the valleys, but could not find safe footing above the waterfalls. When at last he reached Voss and the railroad to Bergen, he had traveled a route that had not been tried in winter since King Sverre, in the twelfth century, had escaped over the mountains from the foes who lay in wait for him at Bergen.

Through all these busy years, Fridtjof had not forgotten the glistening peaks of Greenland and the unknown region that lay behind them. He wrote about it sometimes in letters to friends, talked about it a little, and studied everything he could find on arctic exploring. Some day—when he had finished more research, and had his doctor's degree, and was better known as a scientist—he would like to go across Greenland. It would be a splendid chance to stretch his legs after so many years in the laboratory, and should be useful to science as well. He would plan to take careful observations of the winds and temperatures and snow and ice formations that might be valuable in weather forecasting for the

North Atlantic. But in the meantime, his father was very frail—had had a stroke—he must not be made to suffer any anxiety or grief. It would be a dangerous trip. It might take him away for two years, even though his confident plans set the time at two months.

Baldur Nansen died in 1887, and soon after Fridtjof began his preparations for the trip across Greenland. He had a new plan, a strange and daring one. First, he intended to land on the uninhabited, ice-bound east coast, and travel westward to the Danish settlements on the west coast. This part of his plan raised the greatest storm of protest, for all previous attempts to explore Greenland had started from the west coast, where there were harbors. On the east coast there were no settlements at that time; no ships ever touched there; the whole coast was locked most of the year in a belt of drifting ice, packed and driven by the mighty polar current. In 1777 a whaling fleet of twelve vessels had been caught in that ice belt and crushed, ship after ship, while their crews had either drowned or starved or frozen to death, except a small remnant that, after terrible sufferings, had drifted in small boats around the southern cape and reached the west coast settlements. Only twenty years before, in 1868, a German ship had been crushed in the east Greenland ice, and the crew was not rescued until eight months later. Why should anyone dream of trying such a route?

Nansen had his answers ready. Yes, he knew the east Greenland ice belt. Six years before, on the *Viking*, he had drifted in it for six weeks. He had also walked and run over it in pursuit of polar bear. He was sure that men could drag

small boats across it, or perhaps find enough open channels to row through it and make a landing on the shore. Then, once landed, they had only one crossing to make, straight to the west coast, where there would be food and shelter and ships to take them home. If they started from the west coast, they must make the return trip by the same route, for there would be no ship waiting for them on the east. That meant double the distance to cover, and twice the amount of food to carry. And then he added: "If we know that behind there is nothing, we must go forward." It was the old idea of daring men since time began, that if they burn their bridges behind them, they are not tempted to retreat.

The other new part of his plan was to make the trip as much as possible on ski. A few years earlier, Nordenskjöld had explored about eighty miles inland on the ice cap and reported that two Lapps in his outfit had gone far ahead of the rest of the party on ski, and had said that the endless snow fields made very good skiing. Only two years before, Robert Peary, with a Danish companion, had traveled for nearly a month on the inland ice, using American snowshoes part of the way and dragging two light sledges with their supplies. On the return trip they had lashed the two sledges together, rigged a canvas for sail, and, running under the wind, had averaged forty-five miles a day for three days.

When Nansen first explained his plan, the university approved and asked the Norwegian Parliament for money for the expedition as a probable benefit to science. However, the storm of ridicule and protest that arose was too much for the government, and it refused the grant. "Why," demanded

one newspaper, "should the government pay for a young Norwegian's pleasure trip across Greenland?" A comic weekly in Bergen published the following as a notice: "Exhibition! In the month of June next, Fridtjof Nansen, curator of the museum, will give an exhibition of ski-running with long-distance jumping on the inland ice of Greenland. Good seats in the crevasses. Return tickets unnecessary." The whole plan was impractical, impossible, against all common sense! Nansen was ready to use his own money rather than give up the trip, but in the end a wealthy merchant of Copenhagen offered a thousand dollars, and with that amount on hand Nansen went ahead with his work.

He had a busy winter, for he faced the examinations for his advanced degree in the spring, and also spent months of study and experiment on his expedition. He selected five men to go with him, three Norwegians and two Lapps. They were Sverdrup, sea captain and farmer; Dietrichsen, army captain, sportsman, and athlete; Trana, farmer and sailor; and the two Lapps, Ravna and Balto, sturdy but ignorant and easily frightened. Six men to travel on foot across an unexplored land of glaciers, crevasses, and driving blizzards, dragging with them all the food and shelter they could have for more than two months! It was a great responsibility for a young and inexperienced explorer; one small error, one slip in his plans, might cost the lives of the whole party.

He spent months of study and experiment on the equipment, for everything had to be as light as possible yet strong enough to stand very rough traveling. His sledges he designed himself, making them of wood, slender and light, but very

strong, with all fastenings of thongs rather than screws and nails, and with broad flat runners like ski. Each sledge had a curved piece, like a chair back, at the rear end that could be used for pushing and steering when two men were handling one sledge. The sledges could also, when the wind was right, be lashed together and fitted with sails and run like iceboats.



During the winter before the trip, Nansen had spent many nights sleeping out in the mountains, testing different kinds of sleeping bags, and he finally decided on reindeer skin as giving the most warmth with the least weight. There were two of these bags, each to hold three men, for the cold would be so intense that they would need the heat from three bodies to keep one sleeping bag warm. All food and clothing was carefully studied. Wool rather than fur for their clothing,

waterproof canvas coats, with pointed hoods like monks' cowls, boots of reindeer skin, snowglasses of smoked glass and some of wood, and, strangest of all, red silk veils. The veils were to protect their faces from the sun, which in the thin air of the high altitudes could cause bad blisters and sores. Nansen tells us in his *First Crossing of Greenland* that it looked very strange to see these silk veils fluttering in the air in the snowy wastes of a desolate arctic land, for they seemed to belong with city promenades and fine ladies in carriages, rather than with the grimy, weatherbeaten faces of six toiling men.

For food they had pemmican (pounded dried meat), chocolate, crackers made of meat powder and flour, dried fish, butter, cheese, pea-soup, condensed milk, lemon-juice, sugar, a little tea, a little coffee, still less tobacco, and no liquor. For cooking and for melting snow for drinking water they had a small alcohol stove with a copper boiler. Much of the time, however, their drinking water was the little they could melt from snow that they put in tin flasks and carried next their bodies. When the temperature was forty degrees below zero, they found that snow did not melt very fast even in that way.

The voyage to the coast of Greenland was made in a sealing vessel which carried them with the understanding that it should not lose any chances in the sealing grounds for the sake of landing the exploring party. It was the fourth of June 1888, when they sailed from a small harbor on the coast of Iceland, and the eleventh of June when they caught sight of the mountains of Greenland above Cape Dan, where they

hoped to begin their journey inland. But the ice pack was unusually heavy that year, and there were at least fifty miles of impassable ice between the ship and the shore. For almost six weeks more, with the precious summer slipping away, the exploring party had to stay on the ship and wait anxiously for a chance to reach the shore in small boats.

On the seventeenth of July the ice opened more, the ship was less than nine miles off the coast near Cape Dan, and a belt of open water could be seen along the shore. By seven that evening the six men had embarked in two open boats for the rock-covered shore, expecting to reach it in two or three hours at most. But the ice pack was not to let them pass so easily. All night in wind and rain they pushed their boats through the drift ice, sometimes forcing a passage with axes and crowbars, sometimes dragging the boats on the ice to save them from being crushed. With sunrise, things looked better, the rain had stopped, and they were so close to the shore that they could see the rocks and stones on the mountainside; they began confidently to choose the best spot to land. But luck was still against them.

In a narrow channel, a sharp ice-floe tore a hole in one of the boats. There was nothing to do but to pull both boats onto an ice cake, unload the damaged boat, and mend it as best they could. When at last it was ready, the fortunate moment had passed, the ice had closed between them and the shore, and was so rough that they could not pull their boats over it. A rainy night under the tent on the ice, with one man on watch for a chance to launch their boats again, brought only a morning of disappointment. They were not

only caught in the ice pack, but the ice had swung into the powerful current from the north and was carrying them with it straight south away from the shore, and at such speed that it was useless to struggle against it.

For ten days they were swept southward, away from land and toward the open sea. The rain stopped and the sun shone bright and hot. At last they were near the southern edge of the ice pack, where they could see the breakers dashing over the ice and throwing columns of spray high into the air and hear the grinding of the floes as these broke up and sailed away from the pack. Ice-floes cracked and broke all about them; surf washed over them and threatened to sweep away their tent and supplies. If they launched the boats they risked having them swamped by the breakers or crushed between masses of tossing ice. The two Lapps were in utter terror, expecting every hour to be their last. The Norwegians realized their danger even more clearly, but, like their Viking ancestors, faced the dangers of the sea with high spirits, laughing, joking, and playing tricks on one another while they struggled to keep their boats and supplies safe and dry.

At last there was a night when it seemed as if their ice-floe would certainly break up under them or be swamped by the breakers. All supplies, except the tent, were packed in the boats, ready for launching at any moment. Sverdrup, on watch while the others slept in the tent, paced steadily back and forth across the floe and watched the waves washing nearer and nearer to the tent and piling broken ice cakes all around him. Twice he stood by the tent and unfastened the flap to call the others out, then thought better of it and re-

turned to his steady pacing back and forth. Suddenly he felt a change in the motion of their floe; it was steadier, it was moving away from the breakers. As if an unseen hand had turned it, it had swung into another current. When morning came, it was drifting smoothly and swiftly toward land again.

But even yet they had days of helpless drifting southward along the coast. As Nansen wrote, it was a fine chance to see the wonderful scenery of the Greenland coast without any effort at all, just by sitting on an ice-floe and drifting with the current. He even made sketches of the coast as they drifted past it. On the twenty-ninth of July, however, almost two months after they had left Iceland, they at last set foot on the shore of Greenland. They were three hundred miles south of the point they had planned to reach, and the time for the crossing had become very short, but there was no talk of giving up. They were only one hundred and eighty miles from a settlement on the southernmost point of Greenland, where they might have spent the winter and then tried the crossing early the next summer, but they celebrated their landing with the first hot meal in many days, and by five in the afternoon were in their boats, heading north for a harbor nearer Cape Dan and the route they wanted to follow.

Time was becoming more and more precious. The last boat for home would leave Christianshaab, on the west coast, about the middle of September. If they missed that, they could not reach Norway until some time the next spring. Worse still, in a few weeks winter would be advancing over the ice cap, with blinding snow and bitter wind, against which their little canvas tent would be poor shelter. Their supply of

food had been planned for two months between leaving ship and arriving at Christianshaab. Already they had been twelve days from the ship and were three hundred miles off their course. For twelve more weary days they forced their boats northward in the open water close to the coast, rowing as much as possible, and eating and sleeping as little as possible. During twelve days they had only one warm meal; the rest was only cold water, dry bread, and dried meat. Sometimes rowing, sometimes hauling their boats over the ice, sometimes breaking a channel as they went, they pushed doggedly on to find a landing place from which they could climb to the inland ice. At times both wind and current from the north were so strong that they made no progress at all, although they rowed with all their strength. Monstrous ice bergs, rising one and two hundred feet above the surface of the water, drifted in the sheltered bays in companies, like strange aquatic giants, and blocked their way. When one of these giants cracked and fell in pieces or turned over in the water, as they often did without warning, the little boats rocked in the swell and almost capsized. At times the overhanging glaciers threatened to crush them with falling masses of ice. Twice they came to Eskimo encampments, which they could both hear and smell at a distance, and where they had a chance to practice their few sentences of Eskimo language, trying to learn a little about the coast.

On August 10, at eight o'clock in the evening, in a thick fog, they landed at their last camping place on the east coast of Greenland. They were still farther south than Nansen had planned, but the mountain rim was lower and seemed to

open to the interior here, and they must reach the ice cap as soon as possible. Two months had gone by since the day they had first sighted that coast from the ship! Two good summer months gone and winter coming fast! Even now they had to spend a week in the little rocky cove, making ready for the new stage of their journey. Sledge and ski runners were scraped free of rust; shoes and clothing had to be repaired; boats were unloaded and sledges packed. Nansen and Sverdrup spent two days exploring the mountainside for a route by which they could drag their sledges up to the glacier and the ice cap behind. On the evening of August 16 they left their camping place, with their boats drawn up on the rocks, and began their long climb.

Greenland is like a great apple pie with a thick mound of ice-cream piled high all over the top crust and oozing out between the scallops on the edge. The pie itself is the land, with mountains and valleys all buried under a huge ice cap that is smoothly rounded over and so thick that the lumps and hollows of the top crust do not show. The scalloped edge is the mountain rim along the coast where the glaciers push through to drop ice bergs into the sea. It was up this steep mountain edge that the explorers had first to climb before they could reach the smooth ice cap that lay behind.

The first night's climb was steep and over bare rock and rough ice. Three men were needed to lift each sledge over fissures and up steep slopes. They made only a few miles that night and were fully ready for food and sleep when they stopped. One more night of travel and then came a pouring rain in which it was impossible to drag the sledges. For three



days and nights, only about five miles from the coast, they were forced to stay in their tent, sleeping as much as possible and eating only one meal each twenty-four hours. It was the twenty-second of August before they had reached the top of the mountain rim and had ahead of them the long steady pull over the ice cap.

If they could have reached the ice cap earlier in the summer, they would have had smooth-packed snow with a good surface for ski and sledges, but by the middle of August the newly fallen snow was dry and loose, like sand, and from six to eight inches deep. The drag of the sledges was more than doubled by a surface like that. The four smaller sledges each carried about two hundred pounds, while the larger one, which Nansen and Sverdrup pulled together, carried almost five hundred pounds. The sledge ropes were fastened to leather shoulder straps and belts which each man wore over his clothes, but even with this protection their shoulders ached and burned, as day after day they strode slowly forward on ski, dragging more than their own weight behind them.

Besides the poor sledding surface, they were held back by the north wind. If they had started from Cape Dan as they planned, their course to Christianshaab would have been more west than north, and the wind would have helped them a little, but since they had had to start so far south, they were traveling almost in the teeth of the north wind, which drove the stinging snow into every crevice in their clothing. It was bitterly cold, the nights were dark now, and the thermometer dropped appallingly when the sun set. On the fourth day they tried sails on the sledges, but it was of no avail.

They could not make any headway against the north wind.

That night Nansen did some hard thinking. He had wanted to cross to Christianshaab, which was near Peary's headquarters, but this north wind would be against them every step of the way, and they would have no help at all from the sails. In ten days they had not covered a fifth of the total distance, and no one could tell what crevasses or blizzards might be ahead of them. It was all very fine to have a big plan, but he had no right to risk lives on something impossible. The next morning he announced to the party that they would not try to reach Christianshaab, but would change their course and strike west and a little south to the smaller settlement of Godthaab. The route would be shorter, would give them the wind in a quarter to help rather than hinder, and would give them a later date for catching the last boat. The others agreed to the plan with considerable relief, for they were all a little anxious about their desperate struggle against cold and wind.

They went faster after that, with the sails to help a little with the hauling, but the work was still hard enough. Each morning the sledges had to be dug out of the snow, completely unloaded, and turned over to have the runners scraped clean of ice and snow. After that they had to be repacked, lashed together, and rigged with the sails. Every evening the tent had to be set up, and the floor and walls securely lashed together so that the upper part would not blow away in the night. So much of this work had to be done with bare hands that they ran constant risk of frozen fingers. They ran the same risk in taking astronomical observations, for it was al-

most impossible to get accurate readings with gloved hands. Nansen froze all his fingers twice.

From the time they left the ship on July 17 until they reached Godthaab the last of September, they did not change any of their clothing or even wash their faces. They looked pretty grimy, more so than one would expect of travelers in ice and snow, for one day they burned some oilcloth under the cooker in the tent and made such a smoke that they were all coated with soot. They suffered from thirst, because the flasks of snow next their bodies gave them only a few drops of water at a time and the boiler on the stove was needed for cooking their meals. They found that chewing a splinter of wood relieved their thirst, and they chewed up almost a whole pair of Norwegian snowshoes made of cherry wood. Besides suffering from thirst, they also missed fat in their diet. A mistake had been made in mixing the pemmican ; instead of containing one-third fat, it had almost no fat at all. Their stock of lard and butter was not enough to make up for the lack, and they finally craved fat so badly that Sverdrup wanted to eat the linseed oil they used for boot grease. But in spite of these hardships, they were all in good health and good spirits and kept steadily on their course.

For two weeks they climbed steadily up the slope of the great ice cap. Patiently, slowly, they moved forward, bent almost double against the pull of the sledges, whipped by the wind, stung by the sharp snow, burned by the arctic sun. Today they made five miles ; yesterday it was only three. How far is it to Godthaab? They left behind the few mountain peaks that thrust through the ice cap near the coast—the

Eskimo called them nunataks—and saw all about them nothing but a rolling desert of snow, rising like waves toward the summit of the ice cap. Day after day they thought the ridge they were climbing was the last one, only to find another still higher beyond it. Every day was like the one before it; nothing to see ahead or behind but the flat whiteness of the snow fields, the sun shining through the fine snow flurries, and their own little company, a few spots of black in a world of glistening white.

After such days, the evenings in the tent were the bright spots in their lives, as they huddled in the light of their cooker and waited patiently for their supper. Theirs was the first party to explore the ice cap so late in the fall when the sun no longer shone at night, and while they were glad of the darkness after the glare of the day, they found the nights bitterly cold. Even in the tent, Nansen's thermometer, kept under his pillow, would fall to forty or fifty degrees below zero. The nights were marvelously beautiful, with moonlight on the vast snow fields, or with Northern Lights dancing and quivering up from the horizon in greater splendor than they had ever seen them before.

On September 11, they crossed the highest point and knew that the rest of the journey would be downhill to the west coast. On September 17, they felt that it was almost summer again, for the thermometer did not fall to zero, and they saw a snow bunting flying past them, the first live thing they had seen since they climbed up from their camp on the east coast. In the next two days they covered more distance than they had in the whole week before, for the ice cap sloped away

evenly before them, the wind was strong at their backs, and they traveled as on the best ski course in Norway, while the sledges under sail went so fast that the men behind merely held the ropes and were towed, while the man in front steered.

And then there was a shout of "Land ahead!" as in the distance they saw the barren mountain peaks of the west coast. Before long they could see the whole strip of the coast down below them, rough, mountainous, and wild. It was not going to be easy to reach Godthaab over country like that. Two days later they found their first pool of water in the snow, and threw themselves flat and drank from it like horses. It seemed as if they could never drink enough to make up for a month of almost constant thirst.

They had three days of perilous travel down the glacier before they crossed a little frozen lake and came out on ice-free land. Here were stones and earth beneath their feet, and the fragrance of grass and heather and juniper around them: a living world after more than a month of frozen desolation. Even the Lapps at last were pleased, said the country looked like Lapland, and that they would like to settle there if they could find some reindeer. It was a happy campfire that night, with wood to burn and water to drink, with grass and heather for their beds, and with the realization of a hard task successfully completed to cheer them.

They had traveled where no one had set foot before; they had seen the whole width of Greenland's ice cap; in spite of delays and hardships, they had crossed without accident or injury to any of the party, and now could look towards home with happiness and confidence. Not only had they seen the

ice cap, but thanks to Dietrichsen and some frozen fingers, they had careful records of winds and temperatures, of altitudes and snow depths, and of many other facts that were of the greatest interest and importance. They had found the solid ice cap unbroken by mountains or open valleys; they had proved that the center of Greenland was one of the two coldest places in the world, a place to be reckoned with in all future weather forecasting.

The next problem was to reach Godthaab, which lay a little north of them and on another fjord. They could not reach it by land, for the mountains along the coast, deeply cut with fjords and ravines, were too steep and rugged for travel with packs and too bare of snow for sledges. When they began the descent from the ice cap, they realized that they could not find a direct way down the glacier to Godthaab, and Nansen and Sverdrup made plans for a boat from the materials they had on hand. As soon as they found a comfortable camping place near the shore of the fjord, and the other men began bringing their packs down the mountains from the ice cap, the two men set to work on their boat. It seemed like a flimsy craft to carry two such large men. The frame, of willow branches, was covered with the tent canvas; for oars, they stretched pieces of canvas on forked willow branches and lashed them to lengths of bamboo tent supports. The rowing seats were made of the legs of the theodolite and more pieces of bamboo. The two men were six days rowing to Godthaab, and said afterward that the most painful part of the whole Greenland trip was sitting day after day on those sharp strips of wood.

At Godthaab they learned that the last boat had gone, but they hired an Eskimo to go after it in a kayak with letters home telling of their safe arrival on the west coast. Then they sent other boats to bring in the men left at the camp. On October 12 the six men were together in Godthaab, reveling in hot baths with soap, clean clothes, comfortable beds, and well-cooked meals served on tables and eaten with knives and forks.

It was a long winter, for the first boat was not due until late in April, but Nansen was not idle. He did a little exploring in the country around Godthaab and wrote up the notes of the expedition, but spent most of his time among the Eskimo. It was his first contact with such primitive people, and he was charmed with them. They had some habits of living and eating that were a shock to a European nose, but Nansen was not easily upset and could forget such small things in his interest in their civilization. He saw them as a cheerful, honest people who had been clever enough to wrest a living from land and sea in a region where no one else could live without help from outside. He made friends with them—he could always make friends with anyone—he lived with them, ate with them, learned to hunt and fish and paddle a kayak as they did, learned how they built their houses and how they made their boats and implements. And among them he saw something that made him think again of ocean currents and of wood and dirt on the ice-floes off Jan Mayen Land; these Eskimo had wood to burn, plenty of it, large logs of driftwood thrown up in piles on the beaches by the ocean. It could not have come from North America; there

was no current from the Americas flowing toward Greenland. The only trees on Greenland were scrub willow and juniper along the fjords. Did this wood, too, come from Siberia across the arctic ice pack, and around the southern point of Greenland to wash up on this treeless shore?

Spring came at last, and with it a boat to take them home. May 30, 1889 was a proud and joyful day for Nansen and his five companions as they came up the fjord to Christiania. The people crowded the piers and the streets, even the roof tops of the city, to greet them. Flags fluttered in the sunshine, bells and cannon sounded welcome, men and women shouted themselves hoarse. This expedition that had been laughed at, that had been called a foolish waste of money and a pleasure jaunt for a young Norwegian, had proved to be a great success, and all Norway welcomed its young leader. An unknown young man, with his daring and his dreams, had succeeded where many others had tried and failed.

GREENLAND

CHRISTIANSHAAB

ROUTE NANSEN PLANNED TO TAKE

GODTHAAB

SEPT. 19

SEPT. 1

AUG. 16

AUG. 9

AUG. 2

JULY 3

JULY 18

JULY 20

JULY 22

JULY 23

JULY 25

JULY 27

JULY 28

JULY 29



III. TOWARD THE NORTH POLE

A TALL young university student, skiing on the West Aker Hills one winter day, had been surprised to see a pair of ladies' boots sticking out of a snow drift. A pair of ski caught in another drift seemed to suggest a spill, and that someone might be needing a helping hand. It was a dark-eyed, laughing girl who was scrambling out of the drift when he reached it in time to help fasten on the ski again. A firm friendship was begun that day between Fridtjof Nansen and Eva Sars, daughter of Michael Sars, zoologist at the university. Reserved toward most of the world, even a little cool in her manner, Eva Sars was a woman with strong feelings and deep affections, who gave friendship sparingly but sincerely. Fridtjof found a friendly family circle in her home. Her father, once the Lutheran pastor of a remote seacoast town, had enlivened his solitary life with study of seashore animals, until he had become an authority on them and was called to the university. Her mother was sister of one of Norway's poets. One brother was a historian, another a naturalist. Eva and her sister Mally had lovely voices and had been prepared for the concert stage.

One night a few weeks after Fridtjof's return from Greenland, his sister and brother-in-law were wakened by the sound of gravel thrown against their window. A tall figure in gray

stood in the street below. They recognized him immediately.

"Fridtjof! What's the matter?"

"I want to come in."

"But it's two o'clock in the morning. Go home to bed, you idiot!"

"No, I must come in."

He sounded cheerful enough; there could not be anything wrong. If it had been some other one of Christiania's younger crowd, he might have been drunk, but not Fridtjof. The door was opened, and Fridtjof strode merrily to his sister's room, where she sat up in bed and said:

"Now, Fridtjof, whatever is the matter?"

"I'm engaged, woman."

"To whom, stout fellow?"

"To Eva, of course."

A few weeks later, Fridtjof Nansen and Eva Sars were married. It was the beginning of the completely happy marriage of two people equally fond of outdoor sport and country life, and equally matched in depth of feeling and strength of character. Their wedding journey was a lecture tour in northern Europe, ending in Stockholm, where the young bride saw her husband awarded the Vega medal for his geographical discoveries.

That first year of their married life was a crowded one. Fridtjof had just been appointed curator of the zoological collection at Christiania University and, besides, had started work on two books: *The First Crossing of Greenland* and *Eskimo Life*. As he never did anything by halves, these books were no light task; everything had to be exactly right. In the

Greenland book, for example, he had to have a whole chapter on ski and skiing that was almost a book in itself; not only all the ways to use ski, but a history of ski and snowshoes all over the world, the different types and names, and how long they had been used, and who used them first. And then the Nansens must build a house! They had tried renting a flat in Christiania, but neither of them liked living in the city, and they found a spot they liked just outside the city, overlooking the fjord. They planned the house themselves, in the old Norwegian style, and furnished it with carved and painted furniture and hangings embroidered like medieval fabrics. While their house was being built, they spent the winter in an old summer cottage near Lysaker station. The place was almost impossible to heat, and Eva said that she was sure that never again in her life would she think she was cold. In the fall of 1890 Fridtjof Nansen went on another lecture tour, and this time his lectures were not only about Greenland, but also about another daring plan, a new way to reach the North Pole.

The voyage on the *Viking* had raised many questions for him to think about. One of these had been answered; he had seen for himself what lay behind the mountains on the coast of Greenland. But other questions still remained. How did driftwood from Siberia reach the coast of Greenland? And what was in the slime on the melting ice, and where did it come from? A noted scientist had put a scraping of that slime under his microscope and had found in it tiny bits of moss and marine plants that grew only on the far eastern coast of Siberia near Bering Strait.

And since then there had been the problem of the *Jeanette*. It was in the fall of 1879 that an American expedition, on the ship *Jeannette*, had come through Bering Strait hunting for a new route to the North Pole. Almost before they were through the strait, the ship was caught in the ice and drifted for nearly two years in the pack before it was crushed by ice pressure and sank in the Arctic Ocean north of Siberia. The crew escaped in small boats to Siberia, but only a few survived to be rescued. Three years later, on the southwest coast of Greenland, an Eskimo found some things that had certainly belonged on the *Jeannette*: a pair of oilskin breeches marked with the name of a member of the crew, a list of provisions signed by the leader of the expedition, and a list of the *Jeannette's* boats. How had these things traveled so many miles? They must have been carried on the ice by the arctic current north from Siberia toward the Pole, and then southward to the coast of Greenland. Perhaps they had even passed over the North Pole. If a sailor's oilskins could travel on the ice across the Arctic Ocean, why could not other things? A ship, for instance, if it were built so strong and of such a shape that ice could not crush it?

If one had a ship like that, and could sail north from the coast of Siberia until the ship was frozen fast in the ice pack, would not the current carry the ship, with the ice, far north into the unknown Arctic Ocean, possibly to the North Pole itself, and south again to the open water between Spitsbergen and Greenland?

Nansen's audiences listened, half convinced by his own earnestness and by his strong, winning personality, but shook

their heads in doubt when they reached home. Geographers and explorers wrote and lectured against him. "A scheme of self-destruction," said one. "Impossible to build such a ship," said another. "Rash and dangerous," said still others. But Norway believed in Nansen now, and the government and private contributors together raised more than a hundred thousand dollars for an expedition by Norwegians on a Norwegian ship to try his plan. From the very first, Nansen had insisted that actually reaching the North Pole was not so important as learning more about the Arctic Ocean, its depth, the movement of its currents, the direction of its winds, the kinds of fish in its waters. The Norwegian people made most of their living from the ocean, by fishing, sealing, and trade; they should know more about the ocean, and especially about the arctic ice pack that lay north of them.

The next three years were filled with preparations for the voyage. The most difficult part was the planning and building of the ship. Colin Archer, a famous ship builder, and Nansen worked out the design together. It was not a beautiful craft when it was finished; it was short and broad, with rounded sides, and with rudder and propeller built to be hoisted inside when the ice was reached. There was to be nothing on which the ice could grip and hold. What they wanted was a hull so rounded that when ice pressure came against it, it would rise up and let the ice press underneath, until the ship rested on a bed of ice like "a ball on a platter." To give it strength, the ship was braced in every direction with heavy beams; its sides were of five layers of oak and pine, and the ends were cased in iron. For warmth, the walls inside were

lined with felt, cork padding, linoleum, and finally wood paneling. The living quarters of the crew consisted of a central living room, surrounded by small sleeping cabins, all painted glistening white to seem bright and cheerful in the long arctic winter. There were a library of a thousand books and a supply of games and musical instruments to help pass the time. There were electric lights, supplied either by the ship's engine or by a windmill. There were eight small boats, as well as sledges and several teams of Eskimo dogs, so that they could escape either by the ice pack or by open water if anything happened to the ship. Nansen thought the voyage would probably last from two to three years, but he provided food and clothing enough for six years, and fuel oil for eight.

The crew was made up of twelve men besides Nansen, all Norwegians and carefully chosen from the hundreds who wanted to go. Sverdrup was commander of the ship itself, while Nansen had charge of the plans and of the scientific work to be done. The company included a doctor, who was also a botanist, and several scientists, besides the necessary engineers and seamen.

In October 1892 the ship was launched after being christened *Fram*, the Norwegian word for "forward"; for this journey, too, was to be without a line of retreat. Once the ship was gripped by the ice pack, it could not turn back, it must go forward wherever the ice should take it. Late in June of the next year, the *Fram* steamed out of Christiania harbor and headed for the west coast of Norway.

Fridtjof Nansen kept the *Fram* waiting for him that rainy

DESIGNS FOR THE FRAM

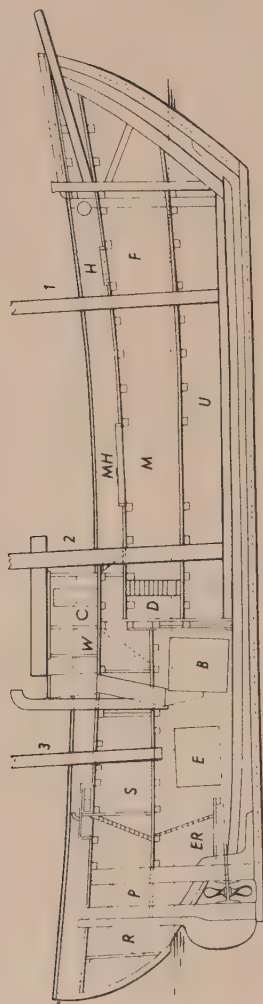


FIG. 1. LONGITUDINAL SECTION

SCALE IN FEET
0 5 10 15 20 25 30

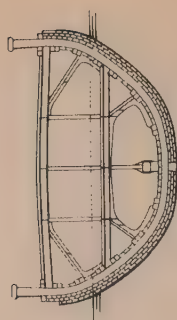


FIG. 3. TRANSVERSE SECTION AMIDSHIPS.

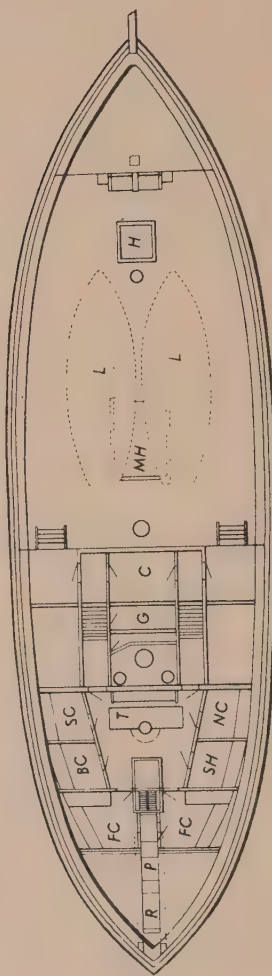


FIG. 2. PLAN.

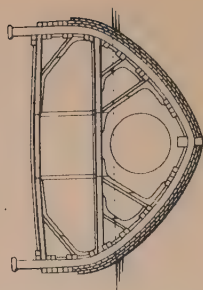


FIG. 4. TRANSVERSE SECTION AT THE ENGINE-ROOM.

R Rudder-well. P Propeller-well. S Saloon. T Table in saloon. SC Sverdrup's cabin. BC Blessing's cabin. FC Four-berth cabin. SH Scott-Hansen's cabin. NC Nansen's cabin. ER Engine-room. E Engine. B Boiler. G Galley. C Chart room. W Work room. D Place for dynamo. MH Main-hatch. L Long boats. M Main hold. U Under-hold. H Fore-hatch. F Fore-hold. 1 Foremast. 2 Mainmast. 3 Mizzenmast.

June day long past the hour set for sailing, and when he came he did not look at anyone or speak, but with a set, grave face climbed to the bridge and gave the signal to start. He had not realized, four years before, when he first began planning this voyage, how dear a wife and a home could become. And now there was little Liv, six months old, too young to remember him if he never came back. Of course, he had told Eva, when he asked her to marry him, that some time soon he must go to the North Pole. When the money for the trip was first assured, they had planned a little that she would go with him, but as the plans for the voyage unfolded more and more, they both saw that a woman, even one as strong and skillful as Eva Nansen, might be a fearful drag on the party if it were forced to leave the ship and take to sledges or open boats. Then after little Liv came, there could be no more thought of such a thing. But others in the company were leaving wives and children behind, and one man could not let his grief and misgivings stand in the way of work to be done. The signals were given and the *Fram* moved heavily down the fjord.

As the *Fram* was built for strength and not for speed, for cruising among ice-floes and not for riding stormy seas, she had a slow, rough voyage along the southern coast of Norway. From Bergen north, the weather was calm and sunny, and the ship cruised smoothly along between the islands and the coast, greeted everywhere by boatloads of people out from the towns waving farewells and singing the songs of Norway. It was a bright memory to carry into the arctic night, this picture of the Norwegian coast, calm and lovely

in the midsummer sunlight, and the ringing voices of hard-working fishing and farming people sending them on their way with songs and cheers.

Very early in the morning of July 21, the *Fram* moved quietly out of its last Norwegian harbor, Vardö, and steamed toward the Siberian coast. The plan was to travel along Siberia until they reached a place where the ocean current set steadily northward. At Yugor Strait, the entrance to the Kara Sea, they picked up teams of Eskimo dogs and left Nansen's secretary to go back to Norway on the next boat, carrying with him the last letters that they could send home. They crossed safely through the dangerous Kara Sea, one of the most dreaded places on their route, meeting ice and adverse winds and currents, but having no great difficulty. Every day the *Fram* was proving how well she had been designed for the work she was to do. On September 19 they had passed Cape Chelyuskin, the most northerly point on the Siberian mainland, and had escaped being caught for the winter by the ice on the Siberian coast. Beyond Chelyuskin, the fresh water from the great Siberian rivers swept the ice northward and made an open sea through which they moved steadily under both sail and steam, until the men said they were sailing straight to the North Pole in free water. On September 20 they reached the edge of the ice pack, and by the twenty-second had worked so far into it that they could fasten the *Fram* to the ice, pull up rudder and propeller, and settle down to move only with the movement of the ice.

This was the beginning of a new kind of life for the thirteen

men. Until they should find their way out of the ice again, they would be as separate from the life of the rest of the world as if they had settled on some distant planet, for there was no radio in 1893 to reach out across oceans and ice-fields and bring explorers in touch with the world they had left. It was also a new kind of life for an arctic exploring party. Here was no desperate struggle of weary, hungry, half-frozen men trudging heavily with sledges through wind and snow and freezing fogs, stumbling with weariness, falling into bottomless crevasses, dying slowly of cold and hunger and scurvy. This party had a shelter that was warm and roomy and cheerful, that was always there, and that need not be set up at night or dragged on sledges by day. They had food, quantities of it, well chosen, appetizing, prepared in a good kitchen and served on a well-set table. In fact, they were almost as comfortable as they would have been at home.

Their worst dangers lay in the fact that they had so little to do. Ill health, homesickness, bad temper were likely to grow out of idleness. For that reason, Nansen had made careful plans to keep every man busy with useful work on a regular schedule of working time. As soon as the *Fram's* engine had been taken apart, cleaned and greased and stowed away, the hold of the ship was turned into workshops for carpentry, forging, and tool work. Everything possible that would be needed on the voyage was made in these shops. The men made their own shoes, and some of their clothing; they made and mended sails, made sledges, ski, and kayaks; they even made tools and fine scientific instruments.

Scientific observations also kept them busy. Daily they recorded the depth and temperature of the water and the amount of salt in it, the strength and direction of the currents, and the thickness and quality of the ice; they dredged the bottom of the sea for samples of marine life. Every second day they took the observations of the heavens that would show how far they had moved and in what direction.

The order of the day was about the same, year in and year out. Breakfast at eight, after which every man went to his work. Dinner was at one, with three courses, including meat, potatoes, and canned green vegetables. After dinner they usually rested or napped for a while, and then worked until the six o'clock supper. After supper there was a little exercise or a quiet smoke, and then they settled in the living room to read quietly until eight o'clock. After eight they played cards or other games, or had a little music until they turned in at midnight. For exercise they had bear-hunting on the ice and the training and workout of the sledge dogs, as well as regular daily practice on ski.

To break the monotony of their lives, they celebrated every possible anniversary with festive dinners and with music and fun. To the usual holidays they added every birthday of the crew, and the crossing of every degree of latitude. They celebrated the day when the sun disappeared for the long arctic night, and the day when it reappeared above the horizon. Norway's Constitution Day was marked with a parade on the ice, Nansen leading with the Norwegian flag, then Sverdrup with the *Fram's* pennant, followed by the "band"—Johansen on a sledge playing his accordion. The rest of the

crew followed with banners or tools of their trades. The ship's doctor, who had been driven to treating the dogs because the men were never sick, carried a banner demanding a "normal working day."

Of all arctic expeditions this was probably the most cheerful and light-hearted. The comfortable life made a difference, of course, for no one had any hardships to endure or complain of. Norwegians are well suited to long, monotonous tasks, for they have great patience, persistence, and a certain stubbornness that holds them steady in an endurance test. But this crew had also a leader who was full of life and boyish zest, and who kept their spirits up with his own enthusiasm for his experiment and by his pure love of fun. Most important of all, perhaps, was the fact that on the *Fram* there was no line drawn between leaders and crew; they all worked on the same tasks, ate at the same table of the same food, shared the same living room, and had equally comfortable cabins. The scientific men had larger cabins, for they needed more book, apparatus, and work space, but all were alike otherwise. There were no dictatorial commands, but free discussion of all plans and, in important matters, a vote of the whole crew. For some of the men the whole voyage was an education, not only in scientific problems and methods, but even in new ways of thinking and acting.

The first of the dreaded "ice pressures" came three weeks after the *Fram* entered the ice pack. Twice every twenty-four hours at full moon, the rise and fall of the ocean's tides shakes the ice pack, grinding floe against floe with tremendous force and with a roaring and thundering like that of

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To break the monotony of their lives, they celebrated every possible anniversary with festive dinners and with music and fun. To the usual holidays they added every birthday of the crew, and the crossing of every degree of latitude. They celebrated the day when the sun disappeared for the long arctic night, and the day when it reappeared above the horizon. Norway's Constitution Day was marked with a parade on the ice, Nansen leading with the Norwegian flag, then Sverdrup with the *Fram's* pennant, followed by the "band"—Johansen on a sledge playing his accordion. The rest of the

crew followed with banners or tools of their trades. The ship's doctor, who had been driven to treating the dogs because the men were never sick, carried a banner demanding a "normal working day."

Of all arctic expeditions this was probably the most cheerful and light-hearted. The comfortable life made a difference, of course, for no one had any hardships to endure or complain of. Norwegians are well suited to long, monotonous tasks, for they have great patience, persistence, and a certain stubbornness that holds them steady in an endurance test. But this crew had also a leader who was full of life and boyish zest, and who kept their spirits up with his own enthusiasm for his experiment and by his pure love of fun. Most important of all, perhaps, was the fact that on the *Fram* there was no line drawn between leaders and crew; they all worked on the same tasks, ate at the same table of the same food, shared the same living room, and had equally comfortable cabins. The scientific men had larger cabins, for they needed more book, apparatus, and work space, but all were alike otherwise. There were no dictatorial commands, but free discussion of all plans and, in important matters, a vote of the whole crew. For some of the men the whole voyage was an education, not only in scientific problems and methods, but even in new ways of thinking and acting.

The first of the dreaded "ice pressures" came three weeks after the *Fram* entered the ice pack. Twice every twenty-four hours at full moon, the rise and fall of the ocean's tides shakes the ice pack, grinding floe against floe with tremendous force and with a roaring and thundering like that of



giants at battle. The crew of the *Fram* were sitting at dinner when they heard the first long growl of the ice and felt the ship tremble under the shock. They all dashed to the deck to watch the struggle. The pressure was terrific, but the *Fram* was the stronger. It was the ice that was crushed and forced down, while the ship jerked and shook, but rose steadily above the broken floes. When the pressure slackened, the *Fram* lay on the ice "as on a bed." After a few days of this, the men were so sure of the *Fram's* strength that they would not even go on deck when a pressure began. The ship might jerk and lurch and creak in every timber, but when it was all over, she had only risen a little higher on the ice and was as tight and seaworthy as when she left Norway.

The *Fram's* severest test came in the second winter in an encounter with a pressure ridge. These ridges are heaps of ice blocks that have been broken and piled up on the ice pack by force of tidal pressure, and that move as the ice pack moves. In January 1895 one of these ridges struck the *Fram* squarely amidships, and buried the port deck under six feet of ice. Any ordinary ship would have been crushed by the blow and by the weight of the ice on the deck, but the *Fram* twisted herself free and rose up on the floe, crushing it under her powerful hull.

When the ridge first bore down on the ship, it seemed impossible that she could stand up against such a tremendous weight, and the crew made ready to move out on the ice. Tents, boats, dogs, sledges, food, clothing, everything they might need was carried to a safe distance from the ship. Just when it seemed that the *Fram* must surely go down,

Nansen said: "Where's Sverdrup?" No one had seen him—he must still be on the *Fram*. Nansen dashed on board the quaking vessel, shouting Sverdrup's name as he went, and heard an answer from the shower bath. "Are you in there, Sverdrup? Have you gone crazy? Don't you know the ship is going down? We are waiting for you on the ice." Sverdrup emerged, calm as usual, and drying himself briskly. "Well," he said, as he began pulling on his clothes, "I thought it might be a long time before I could have a bath again, and that I better make a thorough job of it."

The first year on the ice was discouraging. After the first six months, the *Fram* drifted south almost as much as it did north. Day after day their observations showed that they were moving away from their goal rather than toward it. Nansen had long days and nights of anxiety. Was his idea wrong after all? Would they drift back into the open sea near Siberia? The driftwood in Greenland, the oilskin breeches from the *Jeannette*, the slime on the ice had all come through the ice pack; surely the *Fram* would follow the same path. Sverdrup might look on, unmoved and patient, his blue eyes unclouded, and wait to see what would happen, but Nansen was in a turmoil of impatience. It would not have been so bad if he could have done something about it, but he could not turn the course of ocean winds and currents, or push a four-hundred-ton ship along on the ice. He could only wait, and wonder what he could possibly do for the Norwegian people to make up for the money they had put into the expedition, if it should fail.

At the end of twelve months, that is, by September 1894,

the ship had drifted north only four degrees of latitude, and had made three of those in the first six months. Nansen and Sverdrup talked together in Sverdrup's cabin one day late in September.

"It'll take seven or eight years to work through the ice at this rate, Sverdrup."

"Perhaps. And yet, we may be past the worst of this southward drift now. But we won't hit the Pole, anyway; we drift too much west."

"I'd like to dash for the Pole on ski. If the ice is like this all the way, it wouldn't be a bad trip."

"You mean, go alone?"

"No, I'd have one man with me, and use dog sledges."

"You'd make the dash and come back to the *Fram*?"

"I've figured on that, but believe we couldn't count on it. We couldn't tell even a month ahead where she might be, and she's too small a spot to be found by chance. We'd have to come back to Spitsbergen or Franz Josef Land and look for a walrus sloop in the summer."

"That would be worth two of the Greenland trip, Nansen." Sverdrup's voice deepened with excitement. "You and I could do it easier than we did that. We know better how to do it, and we'd have dogs for hauling."

"I'd rather have you, Sverdrup, than anyone else, but we couldn't both leave the *Fram*. If you go, I must stay with the ship."

"Yes, of course; and I am in charge of the ship primarily and you're for the scientific end. That settles it, I suppose."

"Don't say anything about it for the present, anyway."

After all, it may be nothing more than just a mad idea."

Sverdrup pulled slowly on his pipe. "No, it's a good idea. The expedition would have an achievement to its credit, even if the *Fram's* part should be a disappointment. It would be a risk, though, Nansen. You might not find your way back, you know."

"I know it, but I've had all I can stand of this drifting back and forth, Sverdrup." Nansen sprang to his feet. "I must fight my way forward. Even failure, defeat, would be better than this standing idle."

"This kind of life doesn't suit you ; you don't like routine."

"No. I'm restless, and I'm nearer the Pole than I'm ever likely to be again. It's a miserable thing to me to be just looking on, and not able to lift a hand to help ourselves forward. I'm afraid I haven't the strength of mind to sit still and trust to my theories and let Nature work them out ; I want to be working on them with my own energy."

"You'd wait till spring to start?"

"Yes, but not too late. We saw what the ice was like last summer with water on the surface and all those pools and open lanes. The last of February or the first of March would give us plenty of daylight and good ice and snow surface. If the *Fram* drifts as far as 83° by February, there would be about four hundred and eighty miles to the Pole. With dogs and fairly decent ice we should do it in fifty days. The return should go even faster because our loads will be lighter."

There were more talks between the two men, weighing the dangers to be met, such as rough ice, the loss of the dogs by sickness or freezing, or the risk of scurvy for the men.

“And then there’s the question, Sverdrup, of whether I have any right to take the dogs and so much provision away from the expedition. If anything happened to the ship after I left, and I had all the dogs, the rest of you might have a hard time.”

“If the *Fram* comes through *this* winter all right, Nansen, we needn’t worry about any number of other winters.”

“Another thing, if I reach home next summer, and the *Fram* doesn’t, I’ll get a lot of criticism. They’ll say I ran away and left the rest of the party to the hard part.”

Sverdrup smoked for some minutes in silence. “That’s quite likely, almost certain, in fact. On the other hand, if the *Fram* drifts more south, or even west, you’ll be able to show that you yourself went as far north as was humanly possible.”

The drift was better during the next few weeks, but it was clear that the *Fram* would not reach the Pole, or even come within several hundred miles of it. Nansen became increasingly restless. He had work to do with depth line and thermometers, with dip nets and microscope, and he threw himself into his research as intensely as ever, but the ice in the winter moonlight stretched toward the north so smooth, so bright, that his muscles quivered with longing to be striding out into the unknown, toward the North Pole. It was as if the strong man had to stretch himself every little while in some tremendous test of endurance. For months he could bend over microscope and books in deep concentration, and then suddenly had to leap up and drag a sledge across Greenland or dash boldly over the ice to the North Pole.

Early in November, at dinner one night, Nansen explained his plan to the whole crew, who approved wholeheartedly. The only dissension seemed to be over who should go with him, for everyone wanted to be chosen. The choice fell on Hjalmar Johansen, the best all-round athlete and ski-runner in the party. During the rest of the winter, all the crew worked on the equipment for the trip. Besides sledges, they made two kayaks in the Eskimo style, only lighter and shorter, so that they could be carried on the sledges. On the ice, the sledges were to carry the kayaks; on the water, the kayaks, lashed together, could carry two sledges, the baggage, and some dogs besides the two men.

Nansen planned to start February 20, but delays in preparation, and then two false starts from which they had to return to the ship for repairs to the sledges and changes in the load, kept them back for three weeks. It was the fourteenth of March 1895 when the two men, with three dog sledges, left the *Fram* and started north toward the Pole, more than four hundred miles distant. For the first week they had smooth going, and made from fourteen to twenty miles a day. "If the ice is like this all the way, Johansen, this is just a picnic." But the picnic did not last long, and real polar travel began. The ice became rougher and rougher; pressure ridges, twenty, even thirty feet high, extended in all directions. It was impossible to go around them, and almost as difficult to climb over them. Hour after hour, day after day, the two men helped the dogs over the ridges, lifting the sledges themselves over the worst places. The cold was intense, freezing their clothes as stiff as coats of mail, so that

their sleeves chafed open sores in their wrists. It was desperately hard work, and grew harder as they traveled. They were often so tired that they dropped asleep as they walked, and several times Nansen fell forward on his ski, asleep from pure weariness. When, utterly exhausted, they stopped for the night, Johansen cared for the dogs while Nansen put up the tent and started supper. Then, while their food was cooking, they crawled into the same sleeping bag, their teeth chattering with cold, and tried to get a little warmth into their bodies while they waited. The dogs were becoming exhausted, and several had to be killed, leaving heavier pulling for the survivors.

Toward the end of March the weather grew warmer; the men could rest better at night, and could eat their meals without first crawling into the sleeping bag. Twenty degrees below zero would not be thought warm in most places, but north of 85° latitude it seemed quite like summer. Fortunately they had no storms or fogs, but day after day of bright sunshine, even when the wind was bitterly cold. Day after day they hoped for smooth ice again, but found only a rougher surface than before, with mounds and ridges of ice blocks, covered with soft, loose snow in which they stumbled and floundered in heart-breaking desperation. The dogs were stubborn before the ice ridges, and had to be beaten and dragged forward in the rough places.

At last, early in April, they realized that in spite of their back-breaking toil, they were only a little farther north than the week before. The ice was drifting south again, taking them with it almost as fast as they were walking north.

"I'm certain we can't make the Pole, Johansen," Nansen said soberly. "Not with these dogs and the ice as it is."

"We might get to the Pole, but how would we get back to land? These dogs aren't fit for much more."

"I hoped we might reach the 87th parallel, but I begin to think it would be a needless risk. We could do more good exploring the east side of Franz Josef Land than we can here. We're seeing now everything we will see if we keep on to the Pole itself. This ice grows worse instead of better, and all this drift shows that there's no land north of us."

From their camp on the morning of April 8, Nansen went on ski some distance to the north and climbed the highest ice ridge he could find. As far as he could see there was nothing but broken ice and towering ridges: no better traveling than they had had, and probably worse. Back at camp, he took their position and found that they had reached 86° 14' north latitude, almost two hundred miles nearer the Pole than anyone else had yet gone.

"We'll rest today, and then turn back. If we can reach Franz Josef Land this summer, we can be in Norway for the winter."

A Norwegian flag set in the ice to mark the place, a hearty meal and a good rest in the sleeping bag, were their only celebration. The next morning they started toward Franz Josef Land, more than three hundred miles away, and farther in time than they had dreamed. For five months they were to toil over the ice toward land and open water, where they might find boats and passage home. For a while in April they had smoother ice and traveled fast in spite of tired dogs.

Home seemed near all at once, something that they might see very soon, if they could keep this pace, and find land and some fishing sloop to take them to Norway.

And then one night both men forgot to wind their watches. Not very serious, was it, for men alone on the polar ice? There were no trains to catch, no office hours to keep; what difference whether or not they knew the time either by day or by night? There was just the difference between knowing and not knowing where they were on the face of the globe, for by the angle of the sun from the earth at different times of day they figured out their position on lines of longitude and latitude, and estimated how far they had traveled and in what direction. Their watches had stopped for only a few minutes before they started again, but that was enough to set their longitude figures six degrees too far west, and to give them more than a year of harrowing uncertainty and anxiety.

By the end of April they were expecting signs of land or open water, thinking that they were north of Franz Josef Land, when really they were still far to the east. Day after day Nansen's journal told the story. April 28: Land was surely near; they would soon see something on the horizon. May 5: Only sixteen dogs left, and still so far to land. May 5: "Much farther west than we expected, $66^{\circ} 15'$, we shall soon have land in sight." (Of course, they were in 72° and land was very far away.) May 9: "More and more surprised at not seeing signs of land." May 12: "We do nothing but scan the horizon for land." May 21: "As yet no sign of land. This is becoming rather exciting." May 26: "We must meet

with land, and this within not many days." May 31: "This month gone too without our reaching land, without even seeing it."

During May the ice was melting, forming a surface of slush through which men and dogs slipped and splashed, while the sledges dragged as if made of lead. Long lanes of water opened in the ice, the solid ice began to crack and break; several times they were halted by snow storms. They were wet and cold and hungry, but worst of all they were bewildered and lost and beginning to wonder if they would reach home after all. By June their food supply was low and they were on very scanty rations, while the dogs were so weakened that all but three had been killed. The men harnessed themselves to the sledges with the remaining dogs, and strained every muscle to find a road among the stretches of thin ice. On June 11 Nansen wrote: "No sign of land in any direction and no open water. We do not know where we are, and we do not know when this will end. Meanwhile our provisions are dwindling day by day." That day they struggled all day to cover only one mile, the next day only two miles. If only they could find water open enough to use the kayaks and have some rest from dragging sledges! June 20: "We no longer dare eat as much as we require. . . . I lie awake at night by the hour, racking my brain to find a way out of our difficulties."

The only game they had seen was birds on which they hated to waste their precious ammunition, and some very small fish. At last, on the twenty-second of June, they saw and killed two seal, and gorged themselves with fine arctic



meals of fat meat and blubber until they fairly oozed with oil, and of pancakes of flour mixed with seal's blood and fried in blubber, which tasted best of all. On the last day of June they took observations for their position, and found that because of the ice drift they had made scarcely any progress in the whole month.

July brought them three bear for food, but even worse ice conditions and long, weary days of rain. Nansen had an

attack of lumbago that made every step pure torture and that set him wondering what might happen if one of them should be taken seriously ill. Their clothes and their sleeping bag were always soaked through, and they had no dry changes. On July 24 what had seemed like distant clouds were suddenly seen to be snow-covered mountains; land at last! It seemed so near that Johansen thought they could reach it in one day, but they had thirteen days of wading through water and loose ice, and of drifting away from the land faster than they could walk toward it, before they reached open water and could launch the kayaks in what they hoped was a free waterway home.

Before they left the ice pack, they had to dispose of their dogs. Of the twenty-eight dogs that had left the *Fram* only two remained, one for each sledge, and now these must be left behind. As neither man could bear to kill his own dog, Nansen took Johansen's dog behind one ice mound and shot him, while Johansen did the same for Nansen's.

Soon, with the kayaks lashed together and under sail, they were moving steadily toward the glacier-topped land ahead. For several days they traveled past a group of islands too ice-locked for landing. What islands were these? Franz Josef Land was a group of unexplored islands, but surely these lay too far west? Could they be unknown islands lying east of Spitsbergen? Then the weather turned colder, the ice thickened, and the channels closed before them. For several days they dragged sledges and kayaks over ice again until at last they reached an island where they could walk on bare land, and where among the stones they found moss and even tiny

flowers. A few more days of cruising in open water, and then a storm and the ice closing all about them, and a forced landing on a rocky, wind-swept cove. It was the last of August, the days were growing short, and their food was almost gone; it would be worse than folly to try to go farther; there were rocks and moss here for a hut, and signs of bear and walrus for food and oil. It was a bitter disappointment, but they fell to work at once to make ready for a long dark winter in an icy solitude. Food and fuel were the first necessities. They hunted and killed walrus and bear until they had a huge mound of meat and blubber piled near the camp and covered with canvas and animal skins. The walrus blubber they planned to use as fuel for heat and light as well as for cooking. For meat they killed, in all, nineteen bear.

They were a full week building a hut for the winter. They had almost no tools and few materials, but they had their wits and their fists, and used whatever materials they could find. First, with a walrus shoulder blade for mattock, they dug a trench ten feet long, six feet wide, and three feet deep. Did it look like a grave to them as they dug, a grave for two men? There is no word of any misgivings in Nansen's own account of the winter, but it would not have been strange if they had thought at times that they might be digging a tomb where they might lie forever, unmarked and unknown, under arctic ice and snow. Around the trench they raised walls of stone three feet high, and packed the crevices with moss. For a roof they used walrus hides thrown over a driftwood log. And that was their home for nine long months, a hut ten feet long, six feet wide, and barely six feet high. For a

bed, a bench of stones covered with bearskins and their sleeping bag. For fireplace, a stone hearth with a smoke hood of bearskin and a chimney of ice blocks. The chimney melted sometimes, of course, but there was always plenty of ice. For light they burned blubber in cups, with gauze bandages for wicks. The entrance to the hut was protected in Eskimo style with a long tunnel of ice and snow, and had two curtains of bearskins for doors.

On September 25, the two men settled in their narrow cell, and like bears made ready to hibernate until spring. There was nothing to do but eat and sleep. They could not exercise outdoors for long at a time because their coats were worn too thin to keep them warm. They had nothing to read but an old nautical almanac that they had carried for the navigation tables. The temperature in the hut rarely rose above freezing point, and the air was thick with odors of cooking and of melting blubber. They tried to write the account of their journey, but the effort was too great. They ate two meals a day; bear stew in the morning and bear steak in the evening, with bits of blubber fished from the lamps for desert. Often they slept, or tried to sleep, twenty hours out of the twenty-four.

Nansen's diary tells how they spent Christmas: "And this is Christmas Eve—cold and windy out-of-doors, and cold and drafty indoors. . . . At home the bells are ringing Christmas in. . . . Now the candles are being lighted on the Christmas trees, the children are let in and dance round in joyous delight. . . . And we, too, are keeping the festival in our poor way. Johansen has turned his shirt and put the outside shirt

next him; I have done the same, and then I have changed my drawers, and put on others that I had wrung out in warm water. And I have washed myself, too, in a quarter of a cup of warm water, with the discarded drawers as sponge and towel. Now I feel quite another being; my clothes do not stick to my body as much as they did. Then for supper we had fish pudding, made of powdered fish and maize meal, with train-oil instead of butter, and for dessert we had bread fried in train-oil. Tomorrow morning we are going to have chocolate and bread."

The state of their clothes was really a hardship all winter. When they settled in their hut, their clothes were already unspeakably dirty, soaked with grease and blood from their slaughtering, and after a short time of cooking and heating with blubber not only their clothes, but their bodies and their hair were caked and black with soot and grease. Even the diaries they kept that winter are so grease-soaked that today they can scarcely be read. Whenever they talked of what they would do when they reached home, their first wish was for hot baths with soap, and their second for plenty of soft, clean, new woolen clothes that would not stick to their bodies. Nansen wrote: "Our legs suffered most, for there our trousers stuck fast to our knees, so that when we moved they abraded and tore the skin inside our thighs till it was all raw and bleeding. . . . I never understood before what a magnificent invention soap really is."

They were dull and miserable enough, but at least they got on well together. Someone asked Johansen, after they reached home, if they quarreled or got on each other's nerves, as men

were likely to do when they were shut off from the rest of the world.

"Well," said Johansen, "sometimes I snored pretty badly, and then Nansen would kick me in the back to waken me."

And Nansen added that he certainly did kick him, but that even that did not stop his snoring.

All winter long they puzzled over their position. What land was it that they had found? Was it part of the Franz Josef Archipelago? Was it possibly some hitherto unknown land lying east of Spitsbergen? When spring came, which way should they travel, south or west? Would another year go by before they found a boat to take them home? What would their families think if the *Fram* reached Norway before they did?

They little thought that in the first week of December the *Fram* lay directly north of them, distant some hundreds of miles, locked in the ice, beaten by storms, but moving steadily onward with the pack toward the open sea. In fact, in November the *Fram* had drifted north almost to the 86th parallel, reaching a point within fifty miles of being as far north as Nansen and Johansen had gone. It was just as well, perhaps, that the two men could not know that, after the desperate summer they had just toiled through.

On May 19, 1896, the *Fram* had steam in her boilers for the first time in nearly three years, and was making ready to break a channel for herself through the ice pack north of Spitsbergen. On the very same day, Nansen and Johansen, with their kayaks and supplies packed on the sledges, left the little cove and started to find a way to Norway out of this



land of mystery where they had wintered. A fresh supply of bear meat, a new sleeping bag of bearskin, and fresh jackets and trousers made of the woolen lining of the old sleeping bag were their new equipment. For almost a month they traveled over the ice, using sails on their sledges, and finding fairly smooth ice as they went. For a week they were held in the lee of an island by a snow storm, but after that they moved steadily southward, wondering more and more what islands they were seeing all about them.

Their narrowest escape from disaster came on the evening of June 12. For the first time they had had a whole day of open water and favoring wind, and toward evening they decided to sail all night, or at least until they found the way blocked again. They drew up to the ice pack, moored the kayaks at the edge, and got out to walk about and rest a little before going on. They were standing on an ice hummock, looking about, when Johansen happened to glance back toward the boats. "Nansen!" he shouted. "The kayaks are adrift!"

They both ran as fast as they could, for everything they had except the clothes they were wearing was packed in those two boats; they had not even a knife with them. Nansen pulled off his outer clothing as he ran, handed Johansen his watch, and then leaped into the water and began swimming after the kayaks. It seemed almost hopeless to try to reach them, for the water was icy cold, the wind was blowing off the ice, and the kayaks were under sail, but Nansen decided he might as well die trying to catch them, since both he and Johansen would certainly die if he did not succeed. His legs

grew stiff with cold and his stroke became weaker and weaker, but he managed at last to reach out and grasp the ski that were fastened across the sterns of the two kayaks as part of the lashings. At first he thought he would go down with a cramp before he could get on board, but after a tremendous effort he succeeded in pulling his numbed and trembling body onto one of the kayaks, and began paddling back to the ice. He was shivering from head to foot, his lips were covered with foam, and he had hardly strength enough to use the paddle, but when he saw two auks on the water he thought only that the food supply was low, seized his gun, shot the auks, and then paddled out of his way to pick them up. By the time he reached Johansen, Nansen was so weak he could scarcely crawl out of the kayak. Johansen helped him strip off his wet clothes and pull on dry things, then wrapped him in the sleeping bag, covered him with the sail and everything else he could pile over him, and left him to sleep off his chill. When he awoke, Johansen had the tent up and the two auks simmering over the fire; the warm food completed his recovery.

Two days later a walrus attacked Nansen's kayak, nearly overturned it, and tore a six-inch hole in the side before it was beaten off. But that was the last blow the Arctic was to give them. They camped that night on the same kind of desolate shore-ice, shrouded in the same thick mist, that they had been seeing for weeks, believing they had weeks or months more of the same sort of existence ahead of them, the same risks of starvation or drowning or disease, or other unknown and unforeseen dangers to be met and overcome. Twenty-

four hours later they were sitting in a warm room, with lights and food, with human voices and faces about them, with books and pictures and news of the world outside; and they themselves were bathed and shaven, dressed in clean, whole garments, and free from every risk and responsibility that had rested on their shoulders for more than a year.



There are few things in life so thrilling, so like scenes from the stage, as unexpected meetings in far-off, solitary places. Robinson Crusoe bending over the footprint in the sand; Henry Stanley, in the heart of Africa, saying: "Doctor Livingstone, I believe?"; and now on June 17, 1896, on a rocky, snow-covered shore of Franz Josef Land, an English explorer looking in amazement at a ragged, greasy, blackened wanderer and saying: "Aren't you Fridtjof Nansen?"

Nansen had been sure that morning that he heard a dog barking, but Johansen said he was letting his imagination run away with him. But soon they saw dog tracks in the snow; certainly not wolves', but dogs'. Nansen climbed to the top of an ice hummock to look and listen. There was that barking again, and a voice, yes, a human voice, the first but Johansen's that he had heard in fifteen months. Someone was calling the dog. Nansen shouted as loud as he could and ran toward the voice. A man, with a gun and a dog, came from among the hummocks, a man clean, well fed, in warm, whole, European clothes, who walked toward him, held out his hand, and said cordially in English:

"I'm tremendously glad to see you."

"Thank you; I'm glad too."

"Have you a ship here? How many in your party?"

"My ship isn't here; I have only one companion."

And then the Englishman said suddenly, in utter surprise:

"Aren't you Fridtjof Nansen?"

"Yes, I am, and you are Frederick Jackson."

It was the English explorer Jackson, in charge of a scientific and exploring expedition that had been working in Franz

Josef Land for two years, with its camp only one month's journey from the dreary hut in the cove where Nansen and Johansen had slept away the winter. Inside an hour, the two Norwegians were in the English camp, answering a storm of questions, hearing news of the outside world, and opening a box of letters from Norway that Jackson had brought with him the summer before on the chance that the *Fram* might touch at Franz Josef Land on her way out of the ice.

Two months later, on the thirteenth of August 1896, an English ship dropped anchor in the harbor of Vardö, and two Norwegians were let over her side in a boat. In a few minutes they had found the telegraph office and had sent the news flashing to Christiania that Fridtjof Nansen and Lieutenant Johansen had arrived in Vardö, that they had traveled over the ice nearer to the North Pole than anyone before them, and that the *Fram* should arrive soon. Nansen would have given a great deal to have felt more certain of that last, but he could not know that on that very day, only a few miles off the coast of Spitsbergen, the *Fram* had broken her way out of the ice pack and had steamed into open water for the first time in three years.

A week later, on board a friend's yacht in the harbor of Hammerfest, where his wife had joined him, there was an "urgent" telegram for Fridtjof Nansen. "Urgent?" With trembling hands Nansen tore open the envelope and read:

"Skjaervo, Aug. 20, 1896, 9 a.m. *Fram* arrived here today in good condition. All well on board. Leaving at once for Tromsö. Welcome home. Sverdrup."

For a moment Nansen could not speak; it was almost too

much to believe, almost too much like a fairy tale; at last he stammered: "The *Fram* has arrived!" A moment later, while cheers were ringing from the ships in the harbor, he was in his cabin, shouting the news to his wife. The next afternoon the graceful yacht glided into Tromsø harbor and dropped anchor beside the sturdy, weatherbeaten *Fram* and welcomed her crew with cheers and shouts of joy. The Norwegian North Polar expedition of 1893-1896 was home at last.

The voyage south along the coast was a triumphal procession; the people of Norway were wild with joy and pride. For hundreds of years they had been a dependent people; all the honors and the achievements had been Danish or Swedish, but now at last here was a Norwegian hero, backed by Norwegian money, who had performed a great feat that all the world would praise. All the great adventurers of Norway's past seemed to live again for them, their Viking chieftains, and their kings, Magnus and Haakon and Sverre and Olaf, as if the pages of their sagas had come to life for them. Nansen was overwhelmed, as he felt this great outpouring of pride and honest affection, and realized how deeply he loved his native land and these sturdy people whose lives were so hard and whose hearts were so generous.

As they steamed slowly past a small harbor one morning, a fisherman rowed alongside the yacht where Nansen and his secretary were leaning over the rail, and hailed them:

"Can you tell me where Nansen is? Is he on the *Fram*?"

"No," smiled Nansen, "I believe he's on this boat."

"I wonder if I could get on board. I'm so desperately anxious to see him."

"I'm afraid we can't stop. We're behind time now."

"That's a pity," said the fisherman, still rowing and staring hard at Nansen. "I do want to see the man himself."

"Well, since you're so anxious, I will tell you that you are looking at him now." Nansen was laughing.

The fisherman dropped his oars and stood up in the boat, his cap in his hands.

"Is it you? Is it you, indeed? Didn't I guess it? Welcome home again!"

There were receptions and banquets, music and speeches, there was a beautiful service in Trondheim Cathedral; but in Nansen's own story of his homecoming, as he tells it in *Farthest North*, there is no description of these, nothing but the story of the solitary fisherman, bareheaded in his boat, welcoming him home to Norway.

It is hard to realize now what Nansen's achievement meant to Norwegians. It was as if each one of them had done a great thing himself, or as if he felt for the first time that he might do a great thing. The mass of the people understood very little about the discoveries made, but they did know about dangers to ships in the ice pack, they did understand skiing and hunger and cold and escapes from death in small boats. They saw the things they lived with all their lives raised to be a part of a heroic adventure, and they felt that the adventure and the hero both were theirs. The poet Björnson put it into words at a banquet for Nansen in Christiania: "For it is true that the work, the faith, and the self-control a people practices in silence come to light some day in a great deed, and then it is as if a nation came of age."

And yet the scientific results of the voyage were actually very great. It had proved beyond question that there was no land near the Pole, nothing but a deep, ice-covered ocean; one geographer has said that Nansen was the last explorer to discover an ocean. The expedition had discovered the course of the Gulf Stream under the polar ice; it had gathered a mass of information about currents, temperatures, and winds that scientists would use for years to come; it had proved that a ship could be built to withstand the pressure of literally millions of tons of ice. It showed a new, safe, and efficient way of exploring polar regions; two years later Sverdrup took the *Fram* into the ice pack and spent four years exploring and mapping the northwest coast of Greenland, without losing a member of the crew, or even suffering any particular hardships. When it was all summed up, the Norwegian people had reason to be proud.

IV. NORWAY'S NANSEN

ON the balcony of the king's palace in Christiania stood a little girl, not yet four years old, who held her grandmother's hand and looked out over the city. There had been fog in the morning, but now the sunlight was sifting through it, lighting the pale waters of the fjord and the blue hills beyond them, and shining on the walls of the Akershus and the tower of St. Saviour's Church. Christiania was gay that ninth of September; flags were fluttering on every staff, and streamers and banners swung over the crowded streets. Although it was not winter yet, the school boys were all wearing woolen caps with flaps pulled over their ears. Someone said they were "Nansen caps," and that was very funny, for her name was Nansen, Liv Nansen, and she did not know anything about caps like that.

Far down the fjord, a tall-rigged, weatherbeaten ship with a crow's nest on the main mast steamed steadily toward the harbor, while behind it moved two lines of ships, more than a hundred in all, great gray battleships and passenger liners, dancing pleasure yachts and little launches and fishing boats, gay with flags and crowded with laughing, cheering people. The tall ship dropped anchor below the Akershus; the warships in the harbor thundered with their guns thirteen times, and the Akershus cannon thundered back an answer. For a

moment it was quiet, and then the people were singing "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," in a great chorus that swept through the streets and even to the housetops. Then the bands played, and the people sang:

"Yes, we love the land that towers
Where the wild sea foams."

She watched a procession go up Carl Johan Street to the university; there were flags and music, and gymnasts marching in white suits, and carriages full of people. The procession stayed a long time at the university, but at last it came swinging up to the palace, the carriages ahead, with crowds of people following, all singing and shouting as if they would never tire. And while the crowds outside sang and shouted, King Oscar led Fridtjof Nansen to a quiet room in the palace and left him there alone with his little daughter.

It was a royal reception; not before nor since has Norway given such a welcome to one of her sons. There were four more days of celebration, with processions of school children, with receptions and banquets and speeches and honors of all kinds, concluding with the announcement that a fund had been started, called the Nansen Fund, that was to be used for scientific research in Norway, and that already a marine laboratory and an aquarium had been opened near Christiania. Another dream had come true.

Fridtjof Nansen was home again. The university was offering him a professorship in zoology, and excusing him from any teaching until he had the scientific results of the expedition in form for publication. Nearly all his time for four years went into editing the two large volumes of *The*

Norwegian North Polar Expedition, 1893-1896. At the same time he completed one of the finest adventure books ever written by an explorer, the story of the voyage of the *Fram* and of the dash for the Pole, known to American readers as *Farthest North*.

He was home again, but for a long time he found it hard to settle into the ways of the world after three years in the arctic silence. During their great welcome at Trondheim, one of the crew of the *Fram* burst out: "I say, Nansen, this is all very well, but there's too much *racket*! I am thinking of the Arctic; we had a fine time up there!" And his friend Erik Werenskiöld wrote later: "After the *Fram* expedition he was quite a different man from before. His expression became profoundly serious, almost imperturbably calm, as though frozen, without a smile. The first time he went out to a large party, he said: 'What am I to do amongst all these people? What are they to me?' . . . Little by little, however, he began to thaw and recovered again his old radiant countenance and his joy in life, delighted in the society of his friends, built his new house, and so on."

There have been many men who after living for a while in the north can never live anywhere else. Nansen was too much a civilized person for such a state of mind; he realized that he wanted contact with the world of affairs and of science, but even he found it hard to adjust himself to his old life when he first returned. On the surface he soon seemed to be happy and busy, but his diaries tell us now that he lived through several years of deep melancholy, during which he struggled in vain to recover his old lightness of heart. "I am

traveling out in a great empty desert and life is desolate.”
“I gaze hopelessly into emptiness.”

These dark moods were probably more of the body than the mind, the result of the terrific physical and mental strain of the sledge journey, and the uncomfortable life in the winter hut, with foul air, heavy food, and beds of stone. Frederick Jackson said that when Nansen reached his camp, he was very fat, but pale and anemic, and was certainly too short of breath for much climbing. He told Jackson several times that never again would he undertake such a journey. He had borne the double strain of a leader's responsibility and a sledge dog's labor, and he had paid the price in lowered vitality. He had never been ill, or even overtired in his life before, and now he thought he was unhappy because he was exhausted in mind and body.

Outwardly he seemed entirely himself. On a lecture tour in the United States in 1897 he impressed his hearers with his great strength both of mind and of body, and his simplicity and charm of manner. “A body as well trained and supple as that of a tiger,” wrote one observer, and added: “clad in a well-fitting suit of his own design.”

Those “well-fitting suits of his own design” were a hobby of his for a number of years, and a source of much irritation to the young fashionable set of Christiania. Like Bernard Shaw, and many others, Nansen had been converted by Doctor Jaeger of Berlin to a belief that the only sensible, healthful garments were of wool, fitting close to the body. Bernard Shaw used to appear at the opera and the theater in London in a suit so close fitting and so light gray in color that he

looked as if he were wearing his underwear in public. Nansen's suits, dark in color, of heavy material, and cut like a skiing costume, were strikingly becoming to his tall, athletic figure, but were certainly nothing to arouse the admiration of the "top hat, white tie, and tails" set.

He was home again to the little house in Lysaker, and to the wife to whom he dedicated *Farthest North*: "To her, who christened the ship, and had the courage to remain behind." The three years of waiting had taken courage, for in spite of Norway's faith in Nansen, there had been many who had doubted—many of the world's leading explorers and geographers had said that it could not be done, and that the whole plan was nothing less than suicide. The first year had not been so bad, for little Liv had needed the greater part of the mother's time, and no one expected any news so soon. But in the second winter the rumors began, and in the third winter they increased. Guesses became rumors, and rumors became news.

The *Fram* had sunk off the coast of Siberia, and the crew had perished like the crew of the *Jeannette* in the Siberian tundra; the *Fram* had come through the ice, and had been sighted off Spitsbergen; the *Fram* had been crushed in the ice pack, and the survivors were on Franz Josef Land, waiting for help and in danger of starvation. Rather than sit at home with nothing to do but listen to such rumors, Eva Nansen went on concert tours in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, finding an outlet for her feelings in song, and showing her world that Fridtjof Nansen's wife also was courageous and gifted.

The house at Lysaker soon became too small for the Nansen family. Two girls and three boys needed room, while Nansen's interests and work had outgrown the little study, already crowded when he left on the *Fram*. He bought a stretch of forest land overlooking the fjord, and built there among the trees a large brick house, not beautiful, but roomy and comfortable, and so planned that the windows of every room opened on views of fjord or forest. Besides three studies on the main floor, he had a room in a tower higher than the rest of the house, where he could work undisturbed by any confusion below.

How serene and happy their home life was we can only guess from passages in his diaries and in *Farthest North* in which he poured out his longing for home and his love for his wife. "In my love for my home, I am whole, or rather in my love for her who is my home, my all." "When I dream now, it is never of the Polar Sea, always of home; sometimes of childhood, sometimes of her who is behind it all, giving the dreams a deeper meaning. . . . Among the fir trees she stands in a light dress, her big straw hat shading her from the sun. With her hands clasped behind her back she is looking out across the tranquil blue sea and smiling sadly. . . . Now someone comes down carrying a happy baby and she reaches out for the child and lifts it high. The baby crows with delight and waves its arms. This is life, the very kernel of life, the home and family."

And while he was in the winter hut, on January 8 when Liv was three years old, he wrote, "But next birthday I shall be with you, I hope. What good friends we shall be! You

shall ride the cock horse, and I will tell you stories from the north about bears, foxes, walruses, and all the strange animals up there in the ice."

He was "Doctor Nansen" now, university professor, head of an international society for the study of the ocean, author of many books, lecturer at home and abroad, laden with honors, beloved in Norway, and admired all over the civilized world; what was left for him to accomplish? He was less than forty years old. Most men would have been proud of only one of his achievements. Was the rest of his story to be one of quiet routine, of ease in a comfortable home, of a gradual slipping into self-satisfied old age? Not for a man who could write in his diary: ". . . I would be the giant who stormed the heavens and filled his life with work which, when night came, could make me feel that the earth, nay, rather the whole universe, had been led into new paths." Not for the man who was both explorer and scientist; for such men are never satisfied, they have never found the *last* thing, the thing on which they can close the book and say: "That is all the truth; there is no more."

In still another way Nansen was at home; he had at last found the branch of science in which he wanted to work. In his college days he had chosen zoology, and had been dogged ever since with the conviction that it was not exactly his field. In his diary during the *Fram* voyage, he wrote: "The old doubt as to the real business of my life has come back again, that same quest for a single great idea on which to center my life." Ever since the day, on the *Viking* trip, when he had found the piece of Siberian driftwood on the ice and had

begun puzzling over the course of ocean currents, he had been moving toward his own field of work. His progress had been slow. Sometimes, like the *Fram* in the ice, it seemed to be away from his goal instead of towards it, but finally he found what he wanted. Oceanography, or the study of the ocean, searches for the answers to such questions as: How deep is the ocean? What is it like on the bottom? How salt is it? What makes tides? How do great ocean currents start? How fast do they move? How cold is the coldest part of the ocean? How warm is the warmest? What makes the shape of the ocean shore? What effect does the temperature of the ocean have on climate on land? Where are the most fish found?

It was a new subject; little was known about it yet; and such new work fascinated Nansen completely. As he said to his students at the university, "The attraction is not so much in knowing the facts, as in conjecturing and seeking them." Since part of the work was carried on by cruises at sea on a steamship, the *Michael Sars*, built for the purpose, where facts were gathered to be studied later in the laboratory, it was a kind of life exactly suited to Fridtjof Nansen, giving him the outdoor life of the cruises as a relief from study and research in the laboratory.

When the *Michael Sars* set out in the summer of 1900 for its first expedition to the open sea between Iceland and Greenland, it carried a company of eager scientists, ready to try new methods, to test new apparatus, and to open a new era in scientific research. Rarely have such hopes been so quickly fulfilled. For generations it had been supposed that the

important food fishes could be found only along the coasts or near banks or shallows. The drag nets of the *Michael Sars*, let down in deepest ocean, brought up for the excited party, not only bright, glittering herring, but great quantities of codfish. Within a week they knew that Norway's fishing grounds had been extended to the very edge of the arctic ice pack, and that the world's supply of fish was greater than anyone had dreamed. Day after day, as the nets brought up more fish, the crew shouted and sang and danced for joy to see young codfish caught four hundred miles from land.

This was a joyous beginning to twenty years of study and discovery. By this one cruise the *Michael Sars* added millions to the wealth of the Norwegian people, and opened the whole ocean for their fishing fleets. Nansen was happy indeed, for not only was he embarked for new and fascinating discoveries, but also he could see these discoveries benefit the land he loved. Perhaps he thought of the solitary fisherman, cap in hand, welcoming him home to Norway, and was thankful that he could make life easier and happier for him and many others like him.

For more than twenty years he gave the greater part of his time to the study of the ocean, cruising back and forth in the Norwegian Sea, and in the Atlantic from Greenland to the Azores, charting ocean currents, dredging for the plant and animal life of the ocean, studying temperatures and a multitude of other things about the ocean depths. These studies showed the influence of the ocean on land climates more clearly than had been known before, and opened a whole new field for long-range weather forecasting. From the tem-

perature of the ocean off any coast in early summer, scientists now can foretell the kind of weather the neighboring lands will see that winter. From the average temperatures in Florida this year, Norwegian sealers can tell how thick the arctic ice pack will be four years hence, and any young explorer who wishes to visit the east coast of Greenland to-day needs only to write to the nearest oceanic laboratory to learn the exact course of the currents and the probable state of the ice pack.

It is hard for anyone not a Norwegian to realize how great a man Nansen was in his own country and how much influence he had on his countrymen. His two expeditions had fired their imaginations in the first place, and since then his everyday life had been so honest and so kind, his work in science so brilliant, his character so strong, his personality so attractive, that he had become deservedly his nation's hero. His eccentricities were known, but were easily forgotten. He could be stubborn, provokingly so; he was, as a young man, often intolerant of people who differed with him; as a young man, too, he undoubtedly had a very good opinion of his own abilities; he was often brusque with strangers; he disliked the obligations of social life; he was absent-minded about details, especially about his clothes and his social duties; he had many small pet economies that probably were a trial to his family. As he grew older, however, and love and grief and friendships mellowed him, his faults seemed small matters in comparison with his gentleness, his kindness, his courage, and his nobility of mind.

A glimpse of him just before the Greenland trip shows him dashing into a friend's house, bareheaded, without an overcoat as usual, and followed by "his badly trained hunting dog, Jenny"; his friend added that he was too absent-minded ever to train a dog properly. Later in life, when he had become one of Europe's great statesmen, he went once to a diplomatic conference dressed in a ragged old house coat, and another time, all properly dressed for a state reception in formal clothes, white vest, decorations, and all, he was found flat beneath his Ford, making emergency repairs. His childhood training probably had something to do with his carefulness in small money matters, for his father, although comfortably well-to-do, had lived simply and had limited his boys to small allowances. Nansen himself cared nothing for luxury, even ate plainly, almost sparingly, but could spend freely for things that seemed to him important. He was secretly so generous to all needy causes that he often had a hard time to make ends meet. For more than ten years at the end of his life he gave all his time and strength to heavy, heart-breaking work without a dollar in return, and in addition gave away a small fortune to carry out work he had planned.

His attitude toward money is clearly expressed in a letter he wrote to his father while he was in Bergen: "I am quite prepared, at a pinch, to put up with the very plainest living, particularly for the sake of my scientific studies, which are my delight, and for which I would willingly sacrifice all the other so-called necessities of life. . . . To require little is a better capital than to earn much. The need to earn much

fetters and enslaves a man, while the ability to do with little makes him free. He who needs little will more easily strive towards the goal he has in view, and will in general lead a fuller, richer life than he who has many wants."



As a young man he was impatient with ordinary human prejudices, and could burst out in *The First Crossing of Greenland* with such words as "pig-headed" and "stupid" for men who would go hungry rather than eat a little fresh horse meat. He saw too much of human weakness, as he grew

older, to be outspoken about such small things as horse meat, but he was always expecting people to be more reasonable than they are. He was far from being reasonable about everything himself, could be definitely stubborn about some things. On a skiing trip in the mountains when he was over sixty, he insisted on using a ski staff without a disk, such as he used on arctic ice, although the ground was covered with a deep, soft new fall of snow. He strained all day to keep pace with his party, and refused with scorn the offer of a disk staff, although his own staff was sinking into the snow with every step, almost to the handgrip.

It was a natural step, perhaps, from serving his country as scientist to serving it as statesman, especially for a man whose family for two hundred years had taken a large part in Norway's political life, and whose own personal influence among his countrymen was so strong. It was in 1905, when Norway separated from Sweden, that Fridtjof Nansen began his career as a statesman, a career that one day would carry him far from his home and his chosen work. Those were dark and dangerous days in 1905, when war seemed likely to break out between the two nations at any time. Trouble had been brewing for years, particularly over foreign trade. The Treaty of Union between the two countries at the end of the Napoleonic wars had put both countries under one king, who was to be as much king of Norway as of Sweden. Norway had insisted that it elect its own parliament and levy its own taxes, and that its foreign affairs should be in the hands of the king alone, and not under the Swedish parliament or the Swedish foreign minister.

In 1885, however, Sweden changed her constitution, and put the management of Norwegian foreign affairs under the cabinet minister. Norway's shipping was three times greater than Sweden's, and trouble began at once and continued through the years. By August 1905 the dispute had gone so far that the Norwegian people voted to separate from Sweden and become a separate nation. Fridtjof Nansen had done his part in giving his people courage to take this step, even with the danger of a Swedish invasion before them, by his courageous words in speech and writing.

"They seek to terrify us by saying . . . that we may expect a Swedish invasion. . . . Fear—everyone knows about that; but has anyone mentioned courage?"

"Let us remember that a worse misfortune than defeat may befall a people. Ten times worse are the voluntary humiliations of a vacillating and weak policy of which we ourselves and our descendants must feel ashamed. We cannot leave our children a worse heritage."

"All roads back or to the side are finally closed. Now there is but one way, and that is forward, forward perhaps through trials and tribulations, but *forward* . . . to free Norway."

When the vote was finally taken, the danger of war became even greater. Each side made demands that the other would not grant, and each country began to move its army. Nansen was grouse-hunting far in the mountains of Telemark on the seventh of September, when a messenger came to him through the woods from a distant telephone office.

"Minister Arctander has telephoned. He wants you in

Christiania as soon as possible. He says it is urgent. The Swedish government has made new demands and Michelsen will arrive with them tomorrow."

It was late afternoon, but Nansen did not wait. He rowed across the lake, mounted his bicycle, and pedaled in the darkness down the long mountain road to the railroad. The next morning he was in Christiania, listening to Prime Minister Michelsen's report. The new Swedish demands were too severe; the Norwegian people would never agree to such terms, they all knew that, and war seemed very near. If other European nations could understand what was happening, they might bring pressure on Sweden to preserve the peace of Europe. Would Nansen go to England and Denmark, and try to win the support of their governments? He was well known abroad, and he spoke English fluently; he could be of the greatest assistance.

The next morning he was in Copenhagen. Only a few weeks before, he had said: "We do not wish, in so far as it can be avoided, war and unrest on the peninsula, a political crime which would destroy for all time the possibility of understanding and friendship between the two peoples." The Danish foreign minister agreed with him that a war so close to Denmark's harbors would be an unthinkable disaster. The next day a note went from Denmark to France, Germany, England, and Russia, asking them to use all possible means to prevent a war. By evening of that same day Doctor Nansen was in England, where he stayed for almost a month, holding conferences with statesmen and newspaper editors, writing many articles and one book himself, and speaking

in public on every possible occasion, trying to show England the Norwegian side of the trouble.

The whole story of the month is too long to tell here, but bit by bit the dangerous demands went down, with each side trying honestly to find a way out without war. By the middle of October a treaty was signed, and late in November Norway was an independent kingdom under her own king, the Danish Prince Carl, who took the Norwegian name of Haakon when he was crowned.

Early in the year, when Nansen had spoken his stirring words on courage, he had been asked to act as Norway's prime minister, but had refused. He was a scientist, he said, and an explorer. He could plan new enterprises and lead and inspire men to carry them out, but he did not like political life with its compromises and delays, its red tape in administration and its formal social life. A statesman's life seemed to him to be made up of long, dull committee meetings, of piles of documents to be studied and signed, and of a deadly routine of office hours and scheduled appointments. He was too impulsive and impatient for the slow processes of government, and also he was first and last a scientist, and he could not serve both politics and science. He was also asked, secretly, if he would consent to being made either king or president when the form of government was settled. This, too, he declined, and threw his influence toward bringing Prince Carl to the Norwegian throne.

After King Haakon came to the throne, Nansen was still firm that he could do most for his country as a scientist, and that he did not want any permanent position in the govern-

ment. If some emergency arose, something special that needed doing, he was at Norway's service, but he would not cut himself off from his oceanic studies for the routine of an office. King Haakon, however, persuaded him that there was still special work that he could do: the new government needed strong friends abroad, needed new treaties, and particularly needed the friendship of England; Nansen was the one person who could do most for Norway as ambassador in London. For nearly three years, therefore, he spent most of his time in London, making friends for himself and Norway, and learning a great deal about international politics and the ways of diplomacy. Most of the detail of the office he left to his secretaries, however, while he pursued his scientific writing and studies. A new exploring feat was in his mind, greater than any he had yet attempted, and he was also writing one of the greatest of his books, *In Northern Mists*, a history of arctic exploration from the Greeks and Phoenicians to Columbus and the Cabots. His first plan had been for a short book that would cover all arctic explorers up to his own expedition, but his interest grew as he worked, and the chapters grew longer and longer, until he concluded the work without ever really finishing it.

Every year he returned to Norway for a hunting trip, throwing off the "chains," as he called them, of official routine, and finding freedom and renewed strength among his native woods and mountains. He had a camp beside a mountain lake in the forest of Telemark, and there he could live in solitude as he had in Nordmarka in his boyhood. Nordmarka was no longer solitary, for Norwegians had found it

out, and it was too close to Christiania to provide a hiding place for a famous man. Hunters and fishermen, skiers and mountain climbers, sportsmen of all kinds and all nationalities used it now as a convenient recreation area. In Telemark, however, Nansen found the release and restoration he needed. He might work for months with intense concentration on a piece of research, or hurry from place to place on lecture tours; he might be writing two or three books or articles at once, with notes and manuscript piled high in every workroom; he might be caught in the current of political life with public addresses and committee meetings crowding upon him, or be absorbed in plans for extending international oceanic research, until it would seem that one mind and body could not carry such a strain, but a week in the mountains would send him back completely renewed in body and spirit.

A friend who went with him often on his mountain vacations wrote of them afterward: "No one has known Fridtjof Nansen who has not seen him in the open. . . . Although he might reach the hut tired and worn out and haggard, after only a day or two he was as buoyant as a youth and full of life. . . . I fancy I still can see him on ski, standing looking across Rondane, a tall commanding figure, with the broad-brimmed hat on his head, the close brown leather jacket outlining his athletic body, erect and rugged like an image of our country as we imagine it to ourselves when we most long for it. . . ."

His feeling for the forests and mountains of Norway was almost a religion; it was much more than just a healthy man's

enjoyment of outdoor life, more than a poet's response to beauty, more than a patriot's love of his native land; it was the source of his strength of soul, the spring from which his spirit drank. He thought that the natural way for men to live was "in the great solitudes where new and larger ideas flow in on us and make marks that are not soon erased." Great solitudes make some men coarse, dull, and brutal, but that Fridtjof Nansen could never believe; throughout his diaries and in many of his other writings he returns again and again to his belief that Nature and solitude are the great healers of all griefs and all weaknesses. "The first great thing in life is to find yourself, and for that you need solitude and contemplation, at least sometimes. . . . The great reformers in history have come from the wilderness. . . ."

His personal diaries, in passages published only since his death, express most clearly the deep emotion he knew in the presence of Nature. On a scientific cruise in his yacht in 1904, he wrote: "When I cease from work and look up, it is night; mountain and islands and sea are dreaming in the tranquil summer night. A few stars shine pallidly high up in the heavens. Jupiter stands bright and yellow in the east and for a while the golden strip of the half-moon is mirrored in the silky blue water out towards the deep blue mountains. All the business of the day is far, far away. It is a different world, and again the soul is filled with thoughts and dreams of all the things that are not of the day and that cannot be expressed in words.

"Here, man, is thy home, but there thou art also at home. It is as though thou wert formed of two beings from two

different spheres. The one is satisfied merely with the work and activity of the day. The other craves something else, something that is to be found somewhere in the west in the cloud kingdoms of the sunset, or in the dreamy splendor of the moon, or farther away in the trembling stars."

During the second winter on the *Fram*, he wrote in his diary: "In this silent, starry arctic night around me, I stand in all my naked simplicity, face to face with Nature. I sit down devoutly at the feet of eternity and listen, and I know God, the all-commanding, the center of the universe."

This was not written by some sentimental dreamer, overflowing with a shallow stream of words. This was a tall athlete, with a full ringing voice and the grip of a giant. This was a Norwegian ski champion, a polar bear hunter, an arctic explorer, a noted scientist; this was a man who alone, with only his daughter to help, could sail his yacht through stormy days and nights from Christiania to Spitsbergen; a man who, in a London crowd, could wave his hat with one hand as a royal procession passed by, and with the other hold a pick-pocket helpless in his grasp until the police could reach him. Only a truly great man could write down so simply and naturally his inmost thoughts.

He had need of all the comfort Nature could give him during the next few years. He was in London in December 1907, when word came that his wife was ill. He left for home at once, but she had gone before he could reach her. How desolate this blow left him, his friends could only guess from his silence, for it was long before he could even speak of it. Six years later, his youngest boy died, after a long illness.

He knew another dark hour on a certain June day in 1910 when he stood on the tower lookout of his house, and watched the *Fram* steam down the fjord with a new leader on the bridge, a younger man for whom he had renounced one of the dearest dreams of his life.

After the *Fram* expedition, Nansen had no more desire to try to reach the North Pole; he was entirely convinced that he had seen at $86^{\circ} 14'$ all that he would have seen if he had reached 90° . He had made the really important discovery, that there was no land near the North Pole, and that the entire Arctic Ocean was probably more than twelve thousand feet deep. As far as he could see, the only object in exploring that region further, aside from the mere sporting interest of actually reaching the Pole, would be to make more soundings of the ocean depths and more studies of its currents, and this he thought would some day be done from airplanes or dirigibles.

But his thoughts had turned toward the South Pole—there would be adventure and real discovery, land masses to be mapped, the great ice barrier to be studied, new currents to be charted. He thought about it and talked of it with Sverdrup even while he was on the *Fram*, and promised Sverdrup that he should command the ship if the trip were made. During the winter on Franz Josef Land, he worked on a detailed plan for the expedition, and after his return he talked freely about it, even lectured on it in London. One thing after another came up to interfere, but at last he thought that in 1907 or 1908 he might be able to go. And then early in 1907 Roald Amundsen came to him to ask if he might buy the *Fram* for

a voyage through Bering Strait and on into the ice pack, for a drift that would last probably seven years, that should yield invaluable oceanic discoveries, and that might strike a current that would carry them over the North Pole.

Nansen took time to think it over. The trip Amundsen planned was important, would probably have valuable results, and could be carried out only with such a ship as the *Fram*. Amundsen was young, he had little money, he had no interest or occupation except exploration, he was just the right sort of man for the expedition. On the other hand, if he sold the *Fram* for such a journey, he himself would probably never again find time or opportunity for the South Pole expedition. His plans were practically complete, all the experience of his life had been reviewed to make this expedition a masterpiece of polar exploration; it was to be the crowning achievement of his life. Amundsen had suggested that he go with Nansen to the South Pole, and when that expedition was finished, take the *Fram* to the Arctic, but Nansen advised him against so many years of continuous polar life; he thought no man could stand such a strain.

Until the last moment Nansen was undecided, and then a quiet, uncomplaining word from his wife settled the matter. Amundsen had come for his answer, and as Nansen, still troubled in mind, passed from his study to the reception hall, he stopped to speak to Eva.

"I know what is going to happen," she said. "You will leave me again."

He stood and looked at her for a moment without saying a word. Did he think then of that rainy June day fourteen

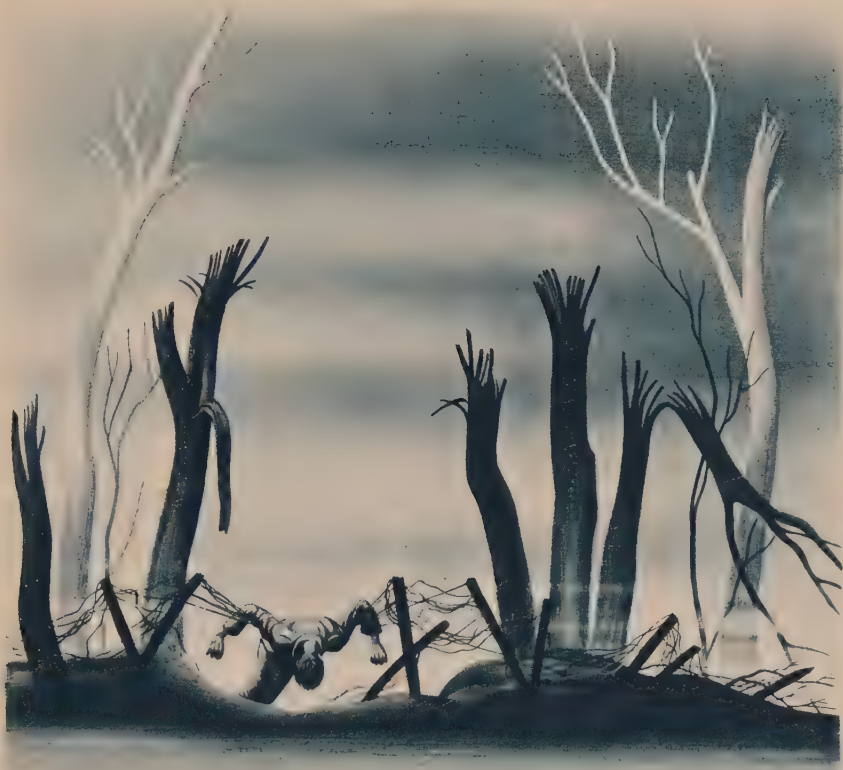
years before, when with a heavy heart, he had steamed out of Christiania harbor? Did he think of a hut like a tomb on a desolate arctic island? Of escapes so narrow that even now he could scarcely believe them true? Or of resolutions made and written in a worn and greasy diary, that he would follow one course in the future, devote himself to science and to his home, and not be tempted away again to dreary, dangerous months and years in polar solitudes? We know only that he went down to the room where Amundsen was sitting, and said simply:

“You may have the *Fram*.”

Three months later he hurried home from London to find that it was Eva Nansen who had gone, and he who was left behind. He might have had the *Fram* again then if he had been willing to wreck the other man's plans, but he would not say the word. Instead, he threw all his influence and experience into furthering Amundsen's expedition; he held back nothing. And after all, in 1910, when the *Fram* steamed out of Oslo Fjord, with Amundsen on the bridge, it was to the South Pole she went instead of the Bering Sea, and it was Amundsen, and not Nansen, who made the daring, historic dash across the ice to the South Pole.

And Amundsen was grateful. Years later, in a speech at a banquet in his honor in Oslo, he turned directly to Nansen, saying:

“As I stand here this evening, it is with a feeling of deepest gratitude to you who showed me the way. Had you turned your back on me that time, I should never have done it. I should never have succeeded.”



When the World War broke over Europe in 1914, it ended oceanic research and exploring expeditions from any European country for more than four years. Warships and submarines and mines were spread over the seas, and even neutral shipping was in danger. Only the year before the war, Nansen had gone with an English exploring party through the Kara Sea and along the coast of Siberia, and had come home full of plans for joining with Russian scientists in a study of the Siberian coast line and the tundra behind it.

He had plans also for more charting of currents in the South Atlantic, and for more study of ocean temperatures, but the war drove all research cruises back behind the skerries of the coast of Norway.

Norway was neutral throughout the war, as were Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland, and, like other nations, she found that being a neutral when everyone else was fighting was a difficult and sometimes dangerous part to play. Norway lived by commerce, by trading her fish and her lumber for wheat and butter, iron and steel. The great ice cap that millions of years before had covered all northern Europe, as Greenland is covered now, had ground against the rocky ledge of Norway, and scoured off the fertile soil, leaving behind only little pockets and valleys where food could grow. Even the thriftiest and hardest-working people cannot raise wheat on bare rocks or pasture dairy cattle on them. Nor did the barren mountains contain iron or many other minerals. Until the beginning of the war, Norway had raised only about one-half the wheat she needed for food; the other half came from Germany, Rumania, and Russia in exchange for large quantities of fish and lumber. When the war began, all this commerce stopped. By 1916 Norway was buying almost all her foreign wheat from the United States, and was selling fish to Germany for cash.

In March 1917 the United States entered the war, and at once began to place restrictions on the export of food. Norway sent a commission to Washington to work out arrangements for shipping food to Norway, and placed Fridtjof Nansen at the head of the commission. More experience in

international politics and diplomacy for the man who wanted to be only a scientist and an explorer!

When the commission reached Washington, it settled down to a long, slow struggle to insure food for the Norwegian people without giving up their neutrality. The American War Trade Board said that if Norway wanted American wheat she must stop shipping fish to Germany, for the Allies were blockading Germany. Nansen's commission answered: to refuse to trade with Germany is practically to declare war against her. Norway's coast is defenseless against the German fleet; if we refuse to send fish to Germany, our shipping will be attacked.

Slowly the conferences dragged on. By summer Norway had on hand only flour enough to last until February, and was so short of butter that her people were already turning up their noses over a substitute made of whale fat. One shipment of wheat was finally granted in exchange for the use of Norwegian ships to carry supplies for the Belgian relief. Months dragged on without an agreement's being reached. The commission often could not decide what to do because communication with Europe was so slow. At times, letters to Norway were six weeks on the way; even cable messages were delayed. At last, on April 30, 1918, Doctor Nansen took matters in his own hands and signed an agreement with the War Trade Board without waiting for approval from Christiania. By this agreement, Norway promised to reduce the amount of fish she sent to Germany, and was promised in return yearly shipments of wheat, corn, oil cake, coffee, sugar, and iron and steel enough for her needs. Nansen was

tired of the ways of diplomacy before he was through, but he had proved that it was possible to bring sincerity, frankness, and good will into international relations and still achieve one's ends.

There were games and sports among the passengers on the ship bound for Norway when Nansen returned, and he proved that at fifty-six he could throw, in wrestling, not only men younger and heavier than he, but even a heavyweight champion bound for the Olympic Games. Scientist, explorer, statesman, but an athlete still!



V. THE GREAT ADVENTURE

THE World War awakened Fridtjof Nansen, as it did thousands of other sensitive people, to the fearfulness of warfare. The whole civilization of Europe seemed about to totter and fall in the fury of the struggle. There was nothing gallant or inspiring or noble in a devastating conflict that destroyed human beings as if they were vermin to be exterminated by any method. Ten years before, Nansen, like other people, had taken it for granted that nations should have armies and navies and should be ready to fight if it seemed necessary, but now he saw war as something so cruel, beyond all words, that he could only say: "If civilization is not to be destroyed, there must be *no more war*."

He saw that small nations, like Belgium, like Norway perhaps, were lost if they happened to be in the way of the Great Powers. Their little armies and navies, their slender lines of fortresses would not save them; some other way must be found. All over the world, for years, men had dreamed of peace and friendliness among nations, but now the Peace Palace at the Hague stood empty and forsaken, while the nations that had built it pounded one another's borders with guns and dropped bombs on defenseless villages. How could nations ever be friendly and trusting again, after so many years of fear and hatred? It seemed impossible. Perhaps it is

impossible. The years since 1918 have often made it seem so.

To Nansen, the League of Nations was the answer. A new ship, he called it, "that sails on a new course with the future hopes of mankind on board"; but it would need to be a new ship, like the *Fram*, built on new lines to outride the shocks and pressures of the greed and pride of nations. The old ships, built of defensive alliances, balance of power, and secret treaties, had all foundered and sunk in the war. This ship must be something new; it must be built by all nations, small as well as large, the conquered as well as the conquerors, and it must be steered by the consent of all, and not by the few who were stronger.

From the time the League was first suggested, Nansen worked for it with his whole soul, not only in Norway but in the other Scandinavian countries. By the time the treaty-makers in Paris were ready to draw up the League of Nations Covenant, it seemed as if they would make it, after all, only one of the old ships, merely an alliance of the nations that had fought together under the name of the Allies; Germany and her supporters were to be left out; Russia could not come in because she had made peace while her Allies were still fighting; the little nations and the neutral nations, like Norway, were to be forgotten entirely. There was a sharp struggle before the Covenant of the League was finally completed in 1919. Nansen took part in the debates and helped open the League to the neutral nations. At home, he was able to persuade not only Norway, but the other Scandinavian countries to join the League as soon as the membership was open to them.

The neutral nations had been shut out of the conferences on the treaty itself; Great Britain, France, Italy, and the United States had settled all the terms of the treaty, while the other nations looked on helplessly, feeling that a great many things should have been decided differently. The Covenant of the League of Nations did not please everyone; the United States refused to come into the League at all. In spite of everything that seemed wrong, however, Nansen urged his country to join the League, for it seemed to him the only hope for the future for small nations. If enough of them were in it, and were at all united in their demands, they might fare better than they could alone; and he was sure that the idea behind the League was right, that men and nations should join hands and work for the good of all, and that there should be no more war.

But he had given enough time to politics and diplomacy; his scientific work was calling him, and many plans had been waiting for the end of the war. Research and explorations, home and friends, and vacations in the mountains of Norway, these were the things he wanted in life, and he had lost too much time from them. The war was over and life could begin again.

But wars do not end when the guns stop; the miseries they cause live on for years, long after the armies have gone home, and the treaties are signed, and all the diplomats and their secretaries and their briefcases have left, and grass has grown over the battlefields, and even the names of the battles are forgotten. When the World War ended in 1918, there were more than half a million prisoners of war from twenty-six

different nations scattered in desolate prison camps over Europe and Asia. Many of these men had been captured in the first year of the war. All of them had been cold and hungry and sick ; they had been herded in camps or barracks, or shipped like animals in freight cars. Or rather, shipped in freight cars as no one of us would dream of shipping animals, locked in without food or water or heat, and left to live or die, as chance might be, while the trains rolled into Siberia. Nearly half of these prisoners, men from the armies of Germany and her allies, were scattered in Russia or western Siberia. The Russian revolution had thrown that country into such confusion that no one paid any attention to the prison camps. If ever in the world there were forgotten men, they were those war captives lost behind the turmoil of revolution, dying of hunger and cold and filth, going insane from grief and hopelessness. For years they had not heard from their homes ; they did not know if they still had homes, or if their families still lived, or even if they still had countries to claim them. Many did not even know that the war had ended. They had no money to pay their way by railroad, and in many places there were no railroads, or they were no longer running. They could not walk, because they were too weak, or too ill, or the distance was too great. Many of the governments that had sent the men out to fight were no longer in existence, and there was no one to bring the exiles home.

This was the first task that faced the League of Nations when it opened its headquarters in Geneva. There was need for haste ; men were dying in exile daily by the hundreds.

The work should be put in the hands of some one person who could act quickly, someone who could manage great enterprises, and, most important of all, someone whom everyone would trust. An Englishman, Philip Noel Baker, of the headquarters staff, or secretariat, suggested Fridtjof Nansen. Everyone had seen him at the conferences in Paris, the tall Norseman, head and shoulders above the crowd, with the quick, keen glance, the fearless voice, and the transparent sincerity and frankness. A great, simple, thoughtful man, "who could venture to say whatever he thought right to any prince, prime minister, or president in the world." He was the man for the task; would he take it?

To a telegram sent to him in Christiania, Nansen returned an emphatic No. He was a scientist, a university professor, he could not take more time from his work; he had recently married for the second time, he wanted to be at home. Mr. Baker went to Christiania to see him. A month or two of his time, that was all the League would ask, just to make a plan for moving all these men, and to estimate the cost; the League would see to the rest.

How many prisoners were there? No one knew.

Would the Soviet government help at all? Mr. Baker could not say.

Where would the money come from? From the League? Perhaps, but the League at present had no money.

Where would they get food, clothing, medical supplies, trains, ships? No one knew; that was what the League wanted him to find out. And this time, Nansen said Yes. Was this, perhaps, the great work, the flash of lightning for which he

had looked as a young man? He did not think so at the time, but as the years rolled on, he found himself in a work that he could not lay down. He was fifty-nine years old now; he no longer dreamed of storming the heavens; his life was full, and he was content; why should he turn to new work?

The reasons are not far to seek. His sympathies were touched by the sufferings of the prisoners as Mr. Baker described them, but also he saw here a chance to make the League truly the new ship on a new course. All over the world people were saying that a League of Nations was only the fanciful dream of a few visionaries, an idle waste of time and money that could serve no practical purpose. By returning these prisoners to their homes he would prove that the League could be practical, and that it was able to do things no one else could do, things that would make people friendly and happy again where for so long they had been sad and bitter.

It was April 11, 1920 when Nansen left Christiania. On May 19, the first shipload of prisoners steamed across the Baltic from the Russian port of Narva to Swinemünde in Germany at the mouth of the Oder River. An almost incredible amount of work lay between those two dates. The first obstacle had been Russia, defiant, fighting with her back to the wall, torn by revolution and counter-revolution, and without a friend in Europe. Other nations had refused to recognize the new Soviet government; many of them were secretly helping its enemies; the treaty-makers at Versailles the year before, in spite of Nansen's efforts, had refused to send help to the famine-threatened districts of Russia except

under terms that would have meant the defeat of the Soviet by the White armies. Naturally the Soviet government trusted no one, would not let relief workers from other countries enter its territories, and emphatically would not do business with the League of Nations. More than half the prisoners were either in Russia or must be moved across Russian territory. Nansen was blunt: Either the Soviet government must find some way to work with him, or else his train would leave Moscow in two hours, and the responsibility for those thousands of sick and dying men would lie directly at Russia's door. That brought Foreign Minister Chicherin to the point; the Soviet would work with Nansen gladly, but not with the League. Nansen asked: Would it work with him as representative of the separate governments involved, leaving the League out of the question? Yes. And would the Soviet undertake getting the necessary credentials from the separate governments, and allow him to go to work at once? Certainly. It took more than six months to get the credentials, but in the meantime Nansen had been at work, and the task was half done. Two years later Nansen reported to the League that the Soviet had worked with him in complete friendliness, that it had kept every agreement it had made, and had often done more than it promised.

The next problem was to find money. The governments of Europe were wrung dry with war costs; the League of Nations had no money as yet. An international loan, backed by the League, brought more than a million dollars to be used for transportation from the Russian border. The Soviet government provided free transportation within Russia. For

other expenses, such as food, clothing, and medicine, a central committee was formed, called the Nansen Relief Committee, which could raise funds from private sources and use them wherever they were needed.

Trains to carry prisoners across Russia were furnished by the Soviet at the rate of two a week. For ships, Nansen turned to England, which held the surrendered German fleet. England refused to lend them at first, but finally yielded and let him use fourteen ships.

Every step of the way was set about with difficulties, with bitterness and jealousy. Nations do not fight for four years and then become all at once agreeable, friendly, and easy to get along with; they keep on fighting in their minds long after they stop actually killing each other. No one can ever know how much patience and steadfastness and courage Nansen showed day after day in meeting the petty quibbling, the cold indifference, the cruel opposition that lay in his way.

From the time the first ship left Narva on May 19, until Nansen made his first report to the League in November, one hundred and fifty thousand men had been sent home across the Baltic Sea. Others from southern Russia were brought out by the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Fifteen thousand men who had escaped across Siberia to Vladivostok were sent home half around the globe by way of the United States. At the end of 1921, eighteen months after the work began, 427,886 prisoners had been returned to their homes. And, what was almost as important, they had brought no epidemics with them. Typhus, the louse-borne disease, was the scourge of every prison camp, but so well did the Red



Cross handle the quarantine and disinfection camps at the ports that every prisoner reached home clean, warmly clothed, and free of lice and of infection. And the cost? The first estimates made by various relief agencies and the League secretariat had been about two hundred dollars per man, and to take them out by Vladivostok, if Russia had refused to work with them, would have cost about six hundred dollars per man. But this university professor, this dreamer of the brotherhood of man, no business man, no financier, had brought all these men home at an average cost of eight dollars and sixty cents each!

Can we realize what this homecoming meant? Nearly half a million lost and ruined men returned to their homes, their families, to familiar work and play? If we think what it would

mean for just one man, after six hopeless years, to come home to a family that had not known all that time whether he was alive or dead, we can begin to picture what it would mean to the five hundred thousand. Philip Noel Baker said of the work: "There is not a country on the continent of Europe where wives and mothers have not wept in gratitude for the work which Nansen did." And Nansen himself said: "Never in my life have I seen so much terrible suffering as in this attempt to lessen it." But he was to see much more in the next few years.

Prisoners of war, then refugees. Probably never in the history of the world had there been so many people driven from their native lands by war and revolution as in the ten years after the Russian revolution. In September 1921 the League estimated that a million and a half Russians had fled from the revolution and were scattered over Europe and Asia. A few of these were wealthy, for they had foreseen the revolution, and had sent money, jewels, and securities to other countries before the storm broke. More of them had been wealthy and used to every luxury, but had escaped with nothing except their lives. A few of them were trained for occupations that they could follow in foreign countries, as teachers, musicians, artists, scientists, or technicians, but more of them had been army officers and government officials, who knew only how to give orders to others. Thousands were disabled soldiers, invalids, and old people, who could do only the lightest work, if any at all. Many were finding a living only in the underworld; others were doing work for which they were not fitted, or which was destroying their

self-respect and self-confidence. In every country there were hundreds of such people, homeless, without money or work.

After the defeat of the White armies in 1920, it was plain to everyone that these Russians could never safely go back to Russia or recover their property; they must be given work and permanent homes somewhere else in the world. The countries nearest Russia, such as Poland, Turkey, Rumania, Lithuania, and Germany, were war-swept and distressed, with thousands of their own returned soldiers tramping the roads in rags looking for work, and it was in these countries that the refugees were gathered in greatest numbers, without means for going farther. Constantinople became the nearest asylum for refugees from all the countries to the east of it. From Wrangel's defeated army alone ninety thousand starving refugees descended upon the city. During the next few years the city received in all one hundred and seventy thousand Russians, seventy-five thousand Turks, and one hundred and fifty-five thousand Greeks and Armenians. Such masses of people in such poverty meant, not only unbelievable human suffering, but also two great dangers to the nations that sheltered them: political unrest and epidemics of disease.

In the spring of 1921, the Red Cross came to the League of Nations for help. Relief societies had been trying to take care of these refugees, but so many countries were involved that there must be some one person at the head of the whole work, someone who would have official standing and power to make agreements with the different governments, as had been done in the work for the prisoners of war. The Council of the League turned to Nansen. Would he act as the League's

High Commissioner for Refugees, uniting all these relief organizations and the work of the different governments in one plan? He could not refuse, for here was proof that the work he had been doing for the prisoners had shown the world that the League of Nations was needed, that it could do work that no one else could do, that it was already becoming important.

The work he took up in June 1921 is still unfinished. The League of Nations still cares for the exiles of Russia and of other countries, working for them through a bureau called the Nansen International Office for Refugees. The Nobel Peace Prize for 1939 was awarded this bureau, the first time the prize has been given to an organization instead of an individual.

It would fill a whole book to tell all that the High Commissioner for Refugees did in those early years of the twenties when the need was the greatest. First, in September 1921, he called a conference of leaders from thirteen countries to discuss the whole situation and to make plans for working together. He then appointed his own officials in each country, giving them as their first task the gathering of facts about the exiles—how many there were, where they were living, what work they were able to do, how many were children, how many were sick, or aged, or disabled. He himself worked with the International Labor Bureau of the League, studying the labor needs and conditions in every country of the world, seeking places where more workers were needed.

There are great difficulties in moving large numbers of people from one country to another, especially when they

are homesick and desperately unhappy. They want the same ways of living that they had at home, they do not understand the languages of the people about them, they do not like their ways, and they cannot make their new neighbors like and understand them. Many of us know how hard it is sometimes to move to a town only a few miles from home, or even to go to a different school in our own town, and can understand a little how homesick and unhappy these people were.

It was out of the question to put each one of these Russians in the place he might like best, but Nansen did try to send each one to a place where he could find work. A few thousand could go back to Russia, but the greater number neither could nor wanted to return. As far as he could, he sent children and young people where there were schools and colleges for them. Czechoslovakia took thousands; Bulgaria put five thousand children in Russian schools; before long, nearly every nation in the League had taken numbers of young Russians and placed them in schools. Many Jewish refugees were settled in Palestine and the United States. Yugoslavia, where war and typhus had killed the youngest and strongest, had room for fifty-five thousand refugees. In one year, out of Constantinople alone, the League moved twenty thousand refugees, settling them in forty-five different countries.

One obstacle to moving the refugees arose almost at once—they were no longer citizens of any country, they had no passports, and without passports they could not enter foreign countries. It was another of those times when all the wise men said: "It can't be done," and Nansen said: "There is

always a way to do things that must be done." He called a conference of thirty-one countries at Geneva in 1922, and proposed that his office give each refugee a simple paper of identification, and that the nations agree to recognize it as a passport. Since then more than fifty nations have recognized these "Nansen Passes" bearing Nansen's portrait, and hundreds of thousands of them have been issued. Each holder of a Nansen Pass can renew it every year by paying about a dollar. The money paid for these renewals is used in caring for refugees who are out of work or otherwise in need. With a Nansen Pass homeless exiles can travel from country to country until they find work and a chance for a permanent home.

No one person can ever tell the whole story of all the sufferings of these sad and broken people. Of just one group of two hundred and fifty whom Nansen found on a barren beach outside Constantinople the story is tragic enough to help us imagine something of the total sum of grief. Fleeing from Russia in 1920, with Wrangel's defeated army, they had come first to Constantinople, and from there had been sent by the League to Bulgaria, where workers were needed. A year later the Bulgarian government, suspecting them of being Bolsheviks, first shut them in a prison camp, then decided to send them back to Russia. Without notifying the Soviet government of what they were doing, they packed two hundred and fifty bewildered men, women, and children on a small leaky vessel, barely large enough to carry fifty persons safely, with the scantiest of rations, and dispatched them across the Black Sea to Odessa. The port officials at Odessa, knowing nothing

about them, refused to let them land and turned them back from the harbor, without allowing them even to obtain more food and water. There was nowhere for them to go, except back to Turkey, and after a voyage of twenty-six days, with the ship barely able to keep afloat, they reached Constantinople. Here the Turkish police refused to let them disembark and sent out a tug to tow them back into the Black Sea. By this time the ship was really sinking, and the terrified passengers were leaping into the water in a hopeless attempt to swim ashore. The captain of an English ship in the harbor interfered and forced the Turks to let the Russians land. The Turks let them land, but herded them onto a narrow, windswept beach, took away all their money, and left them without food or bedding. When Nansen was taken to see them, they were camped on the bare ground, as many as possible under an old boat house, the others outside, cold and soaked to the skin with rain. They were in rags, they had no blankets, no fuel, nothing. Their only food was a little bread and a cup of thin soup once a day, furnished by some charitable Englishmen in the city.

Such misery! And all Constantinople was full of tragic men and women! Nansen sent out an appeal for money to care for refugees like these until work could be found for them, and received it from all the world, and especially from the United States, whose American Relief Administration was working all over Europe. Nansen said once that the United States alone among the great nations did not "count on its buttons to see whether or not it was good policy to feed the hungry."

VI. THE HARDEST JOURNEY

IT was the summer of 1921. Across every country of Europe were still rolling trainloads of homecoming prisoners of war ; in Geneva the printing presses were striking off bundles of Nansen Passes ; in every large city, officials were checking lists of homeless Russians for the League of Nations ; in Norway the High Commissioner for Refugees was tramping the mountain moors of Telemark for grouse, and planning new work in science for the coming winter. But in Russia a blistering sun burned down on barren steppes, where once the grain supply of half of Europe grew, and where now not even the birds could find seed to eat. The Volga River shrank within its banks, the wells dried up. From the Volga to the Urals peasants were grinding straw and weeds and bark to make their bread. Others by thousands were moving across the parching plains, by train, by boat, in wagons, on foot, gathering in cities, pouring over the Polish border, turning eastward toward Siberia, and carrying with them as they went the crawling pest of typhus. The Volga Valley, and the Ukraine, the wheat centers of Europe, had not grain enough in that summer's harvest to use for seed for next year's sowing.

August 12 ; Nansen was home in Christiania, and on his desk lay a telegram from the secretary of the International Red Cross : there was famine in Russia ; Russia had appealed

to Europe and America for food and medicine. Hordes of starving peasants were already flooding the border countries, and pestilence walked with them. All Europe was threatened. An international conference was just then meeting at Geneva, and was asking Nansen and Herbert Hoover to take charge of relief in Russia.

Nansen's friend and neighbor, the artist Erik Werenskiöld, found him that evening almost in despair.

"If I undertake this work too, it means giving up all my scientific work, the thing I live for."

Plans for new expeditions, for new experiments, were already made and would be turned over to someone else if he went back to Geneva. He had given up the South Pole plan to Amundsen, generously, freely, but with deep and lasting pain. He could not give up everything else. Werenskiöld looked at him and smiled.

"If I know you at all," he said, "I know you will never have a peaceful moment if you refuse."

Two weeks later he was in Moscow, talking with Chicherin again. The League of Nations should help with this, he thought. Russia had had to humble herself to ask for help; now the League could be generous and help end the bitterness between eastern and western Europe. Thirty million people were on the verge of starvation, among them eight million children. Four million tons of grain would be needed to feed them, and eight thousand trains of fifty cars each to carry the food. To raise money for all this by appeals for gifts would take too long; the food must be in the villages before winter or millions would die before spring. Only the League

could act quickly enough. The Assembly was meeting in September; he would ask for an international loan of fifty million dollars for Russia, if the Soviet government would work with him as he wished. Mr. Hoover's American Relief Administration could bring help from the United States, and had already begun to move workers and supplies from Germany, Austria, and Poland, where it had been feeding the war-starved children; but the European countries had so little money now, they all had such terrible problems of their own, that they could not give very much to any cause, certainly not enough for Russia's dreadful plight.

It all seemed so simple to him; people were hungry, they must be fed. He had never carried a grudge in his life; it did not enter his mind that others would, at least not toward helpless peasants dying of hunger. On September 9 he stood before the League Assembly and asked for a loan for Russia. He understood of course, he said, that the League must not be extravagant, but he wanted to remind the Assembly that at its present rate of spending, five thousand years would pass before it could spend as much as the cost of the war that had just ended. He told what he had seen and heard in Russia, of the danger of pestilence in Europe, of the hordes that were entering Poland, from as far away as the Caucasus and Turkestan—many in carts had been traveling since spring. The Americans had already begun to work; the Soviet government was doing what it could; the Quakers, the Red Cross, the countries bordering Russia were all helping, but this catastrophe was too big for ordinary means, it was a world calamity.

He was defeated from the very beginning. For days his request was referred from one committee to another. A special committee was appointed to decide which committee should act on it, and after six long days it was turned over to the Committee on Political Questions, not to the Committee on Social and Humanitarian Questions. That was defeat in itself, for Nansen was trying to keep the whole question free from political complications. "Help for Russia," he said, "should not mean merely a crumb for a few—even millions—of starving people, but the open hand of brotherhood from the West to the East, strong to overcome the enemy through great-heartedness."

At the end of two weeks the answer came: the Committee could not approve Doctor Nansen's request; but it urged all possible help for Russia through private gifts. It was a heavy blow; he had been so sure when he was in Moscow that the League would see it as he did.

Slowly, with heavy step and bowed head, he mounted the speaker's stand. "To speak plainly: I regret the position in which I have been placed. . . . In this moment from twenty to thirty millions of people are threatened with starvation. If within two months help does not reach them, they are doomed. . . . We are doing what we can through private gifts. But even our gifts will be curtailed by the campaign of falsehoods that is being carried on. Numberless lies are told. . . . 'The first train which Hoover sent has been plundered by the Soviet army.' That is a lie. . . . I have been accused, that in an expedition I brought weapons for a revolution in Siberia. That was a lie. . . . These lies come from those who



fear that feeding the hungry will strengthen the Soviet government. . . . Is there a member of this Assembly who can bring himself to say: Rather than help the Soviet government, we will see twenty millions suffer death from starvation? I demand that the Assembly answer this question.”

And the representative from Yugoslavia said plainly and bluntly: “It is the fault of the Soviet government itself that the people starve. The League should not help them.”

“Less than half the cost of one battleship,” said Nansen, “the cost of maintaining only half a battalion of soldiers, would feed the starving in Russia. . . . I shall continue to arouse Europe to the greatest horror in history. . . . But it is a ghastly race with winter. . . .

“If you have ever known what it is to fight against hunger, and the dread specter of winter, you will understand what



this means. . . . In the name of humanity, in the name of everything noble, and all that is sacred to us, I call to you, you who have wives and children, to think what this means to see women and children starving to death. Here in this place, I pray the governments, the people of Europe, the whole world, for help. Hasten, act, before it is too late.”

He had two kinds of enemies in this fight: first, those who were willing to help Russia, but who honestly believed such work should be done by private groups like the Red Cross, not by governments or the League of Nations, and that the money should be gifts not loans; the other group did not care who handled relief, but hated the Soviet government so bitterly that they would let every peasant in Russia starve as long as the Bolsheviks were in power. The exiled aristocrats of Russia, related by blood or marriage to every ruling house

in Europe, were the bitterest of these, for few of them had ever had any interest in the peasants before the revolution, and cared not at all what became of them now. With one hand they themselves were accepting help from the League of Nations, and with the other hand were striking at the man who thought it just as important to feed hungry peasants as hungry nobles.

The debate went on for days, with growing bitterness. Nansen's opponents were whispering behind his back that he was mixed in revolutionary plots, that he expected to make money out of the purchases of food, that he was being paid a huge salary that would stop if the League failed him. Lord Robert Cecil finally spoke out his indignation over such slanders: "For us, who know Nansen, all this is as contemptible as it is absurd . . . it is not only falsehood, it is fantastic falsehood!"

September 30; the Assembly voted on the Committee's report and the answer was still *No*. The "new ship" was not sailing well on the "new course." It was a blow to Nansen's simple faith in the goodness of the human heart and to his glowing hopes for the League.

Fortunately the American Relief could begin work at once, and in a few weeks had shiploads of food on the way and was opening kitchens in even the distant villages. In December the United States Congress voted twenty million dollars to buy corn, wheat, and canned milk from American farmers to be sent to Russia. During two years the American Relief spent in Russia more than sixty million dollars and fed ten million people. The International Committee, or Nansen Mission, as it was called, could raise only four million dol-

lars in Europe, with which they fed one million persons. It was heart-breaking work to raise that four million. Even in the United States, Mr. Hoover had decided not to hold a nation-wide drive for money, since the feeling against Russia was so strong, but had asked a gift from Congress and had made appeals only through other organizations. In Europe, Nansen's task was unbelievably hard: the money came so slowly, and the people were dying so fast. The grief of it turned his hair white and bowed his broad shoulders. He made a trip in the famine districts with a motion-picture camera, and came back to travel from city to city, telling and showing what he had seen. The horses were dying; in one day he counted fourteen carcasses beside the road. Even the camels died; there was no food for them; all the dogs and cats had been eaten. In one district where the Quakers were already at work, thirty thousand persons had died in three months. People dropped and died in the streets, and there was no one to carry them away. In whole villages there was no one moving in the streets; the people were lying in their homes, hopeless, waiting for death, too weak to stretch out their hands for food when it was brought to them. In many places the rafters of the barns stood bare against the sky where the straw thatch had been stripped for food. Despair, insanity, and death had settled over twenty millions of people.

He told his story in Europe, and then came to the United States to help the Hoover campaign for funds. Everywhere he went, people were moved by his words and his pictures, but most by the man himself. He stood before them, tall, broad-shouldered, never quite at ease, his great head bent

a little over his notes, his voice deep and full, his whole body tense with earnestness, and spoke to them "in the name of all mercy and love" of the millions dying then without food, of thousands for whom there was no food, because they were only hungry, not starving yet. He was never an "easy" speaker; he needed his notes, and he had no "platform manner," but what he said rang with his own self-forgetfulness, his sincerity, his humanity. An American reporter, trying to describe him, said: "The church towers bow down in the night as he drives by."

He did not give up the fight in the League; he did not let it forget Russia; but the most he was able to win was a commission to study conditions in Russia to advise how to prevent another famine. As the 1922 harvest came in and there was more food, he began work to supply the farmers with tools, horses, cattle, seed, and to teach them better ways of farming. Model farms were among his plans, and for two of these he gave large sums of his own money. As he said at a meeting of the Geneva Conference, "When a house is burning, we first save the inhabitants and put out the fire, but when that is done, we should help rebuild the house. Otherwise we have done only half our duty."

The Russian famine was the hardest trial of Fridtjof Nansen's life, far harder than dragging a sledge on rubble ice, or dozing away weary days in the living grave on Franz Josef Land. He had failed in things he had attempted before, but failure or success had not been important. He had had to change his route across Greenland, but it had not mattered to anyone except himself, and not very much to him. He had

failed to reach the North Pole, but no one had suffered because of that, and he himself had been satisfied with the effort. In other things his plans had worked out happily; he had been successful, cheerful, confident. But in this Russian matter, the League had hurt him, because its rebuff had seemed to him to mean the difference between life and death for twenty million people, and because it killed his dream of friendliness between Russia and the rest of Europe. He had been hurt in his pride too, for he had made an agreement with the Soviet government and had not been able to carry out his part of it. The Russians had trusted him—he was the only European outside Russia whom they did trust—and he had failed them. And he grieved that the League itself could not show a greater spirit. He was older from that year, and was never so confident again.

Many people still believe that even if the League had lent the money, just as many people would have starved, because the Russian railroads could not carry so much food. The American Relief had months of trouble with the Russian railroads. There were not enough freight cars, or warehouses, or locomotives, or fuel for locomotives; during the first five months of its work, more than one-third of the cars of food never reached the Volga Valley, and no one knew where they went; bad traffic management jammed dozens of trains in railroad centers when they should have been moving; and through the whole two years, there was always more American food piled in the ports of entry than the railroads could carry away.

Others believe that a loan would have made better feeling

than gifts, and that the Soviet officials would have managed the railroads better for a loan than they did under charity. They were suspicious of Americans, for the United States would not recognize their government and therefore would not deal with them officially. No one can say just how things would have gone if Nansen had been successful. He believed everything would have worked swiftly and smoothly, and that the Soviet would have entered the League, and a new era of peace would have begun in Europe. Perhaps he was a visionary, an optimist; but, twenty-five years before, he had proved that his dreams were not so impossible as others thought, and that a ship could be built to ride on the ice. Possibly he was right about Russia too, if he could have been given a chance to prove it. Before another year was over, he did have a chance to prove that an idea of his would work in another country, as it might have worked in Russia.

Summer of 1922, and the crops were ripening in Anatolia. Women and children and old men were getting ready for harvest, for the young men were away fighting, Greeks and Armenians together against the Turks, when a sudden terror swept over the villages like flame. "The Turks were coming! They had crushed the Greek army, they were driving the Greeks out of the country as they had driven out the Armenians!" In Smyrna and the cities of the coast, with the flames of burning buildings behind them, the frantic people swarmed into boats or leaped from the docks to swim to the foreign ships that lay in the harbor. From Brusa and the slopes of Mount Olympus, they fled to Constantinople, terror-stricken without food or money, and with no clothes but the

ones they were wearing. In Thrace a hundred thousand Greeks left their ripening fields, pouring along the highway to the west, packing the streets of Adrianople, milling at the single bridge over the Maritza. Forty-eight days to get out of the country, the Turkish proclamation had said, but because so few of them could read, the word had spread that they had only forty-eight hours. Surely just behind them must be the Turkish army, ready to massacre them as it had massacred the Armenians at Van. More than a million Greeks from Thrace and Anatolia were returning to Greece, penniless, starving, in rags, hysterical with fear. How could they be cared for in Greece, where there were now only four million people, where the soil was thin and the rocks were many, and where there was not very much money or work for anyone?

The Assembly of the League had just opened its session at Geneva, when the High Commissioner for Refugees strode to the stand and asked permission to read a telegram he had just received from the Greek government: Greece was overwhelmed and helpless before such a migration. What could the League do to help? Something must be done at once. Inside twenty-four hours the League had voted a first sum for immediate relief, and the separate governments had pledged more. Speed like this was to Nansen's liking. He sat up all that night sending orders for food, chartering ships to carry it, placing his helpers where they could care for the refugees. Tents and barracks were to be set up at the Greek ports to care for the people until other plans could be worked out. For he had other plans—the League must do more than

merely feed and clothe these people; it must find a place for them to live and work and to build their homes.

Another "insane" Nansen plan! Where would he find room in Greece for all these Greeks from Turkey? The answer sounded wilder to the ears of the diplomats than anything they had heard in all their lives. He would move half a million Turks out of Macedonia and put Greeks in their place. "But it can't be done!" Why can't it be done? What else could be done? Those Greeks could not go back to Turkey; their lives would be in danger sooner or later if they did, and the chances were that the Turks would not let them come back. The Turks who were living in Macedonia did not get along well with their Greek neighbors; they had always quarreled, they probably always would. The only way to insure peace between Greece and Turkey was to keep the Turks in Turkey and the Greeks in Greece.

No one except Nansen thought it could be done, but they did not know his patience, his thoroughness, his skill in dealing with diplomats. He tried it, and it worked. The Turkish government agreed, the Greek government agreed. It was not simply an exchange of prisoners, but of whole populations and of their property. It took time, nearly eight years before the work was finished, with endless conferences and agreements and plans, and with generous loans to Greece by the League; but when it was done, two million people had been moved to new homes and made self-supporting, and there had been no starvation and no epidemics.

The transfer of the Macedonian Turks took care of only part of the Greek refugees. For the rest Nansen found open,

fertile land in western Thrace, and with the help of the loans from the League, he settled the people in new villages. They lived in tents at first, while they made brick for their own buildings, and began cultivating little farms. They started industries new to Greece, rug-weaving in the Oriental way, the culture of tobacco, of silkworms, improved cultivation of grapes. An insane dream? But it worked, and in the place of ragged tramps and criminals, or helpless public charges, there were villages of hardworking, honest, useful people, whose industry and thrift would soon pay back all that the Greek government had borrowed of the League.

Nansen was a world statesman now. Year after year, he traveled back and forth over Europe, or to America, busy and burdened with plans and hopes. The sorrow he had seen, and the battles he had fought, had lined his face and slowed his step, but his head was still high and his eyes quick and bright. He found time, some way or other, to write books, an amazing number, on many subjects: *A Trip to Spitsbergen*, *The Strandflat and Isostasy*, *Sporting Days in Wild Norway*, *Russia and Peace*, *Hunting and Adventure in the Arctic*, *Armenia and the Near East*, *Through the Caucasus to the Volga*. And articles on science and politics and world peace, in both English and Norwegian, poured out all through those busy years.

But his great idea was ever and always the League of Nations. That was the "means of salvation" to him. "Should the League fail, then everything is lost. But I do not believe it will fail. We must make every effort to strengthen the League. I believe it will have a great future." He did his best

to strengthen it and to inspire others with his own dream of what it might be—a protection for the weak and oppressed, a judge in the disputes of its members, a force for peace and justice. He was a familiar figure in Geneva, as a Norwegian writer described him: “He was one of the sights of Geneva—the proudest after Mont Blanc! I used to meet him on the Quai Wilson at eight o’clock in the morning, erect and vigorous after his cold morning tub. He was always the first man in the bath, the first man at his desk. . . . When he waltzed around the ballrooms of Geneva—and he was fond of dancing—he swept the small, swarthy diplomats from the floor like flies from the top of a table. . . .”

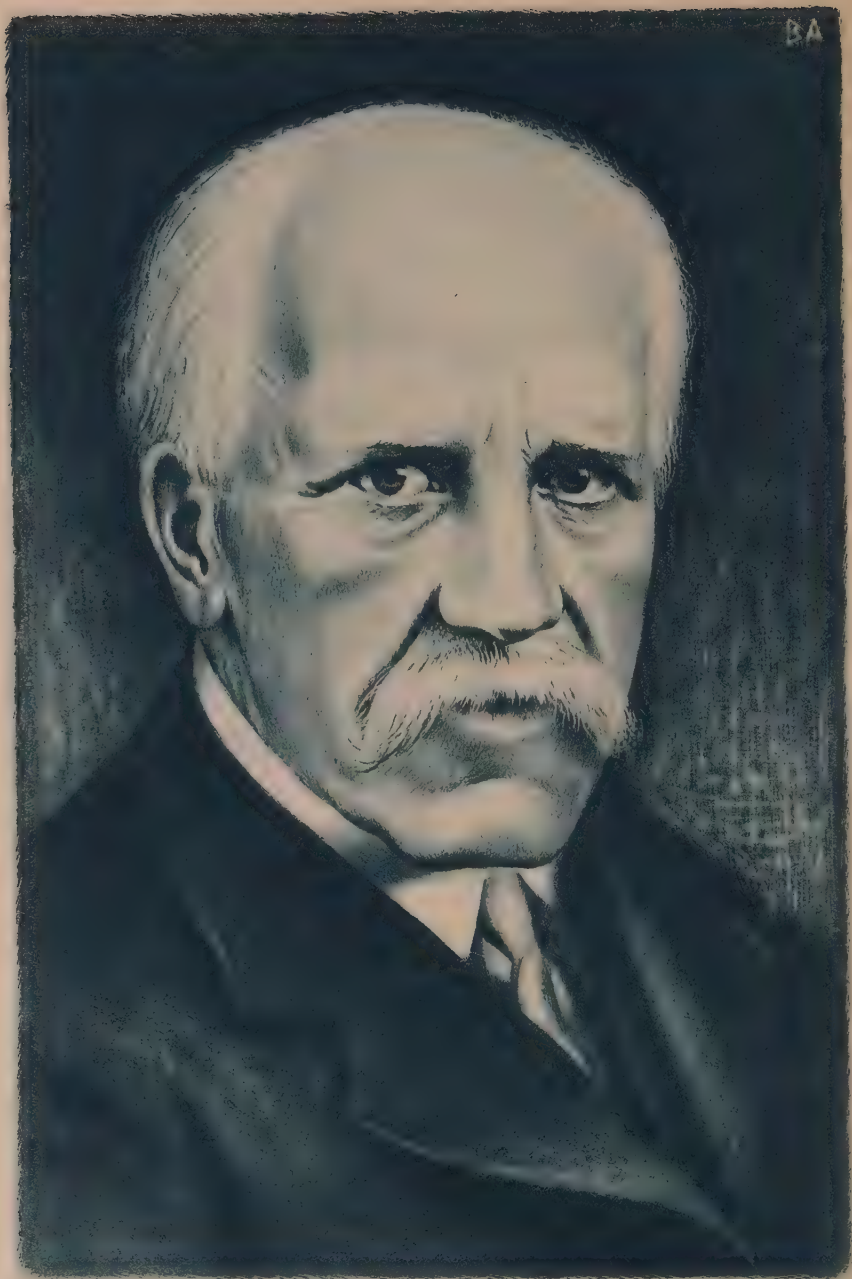
In Norway they scarcely knew what he was doing. When, as a young man, he came home from Greenland, and from the polar ice, he was greeted with cannon salutes and parades, with music and garlands. But now, when his journeys meant the saving of millions of lives, when he swayed kings and ministers and diplomats to his way of thinking, when he was called one of Europe’s greatest statesmen, Norway scarcely knew it. In December 1922, however, he came home to Christiania to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and Norway heard for the first time how the rest of the world regarded him. The prize amounted to more than ten thousand dollars that year, and he gave it all for agricultural stations in Russia and for new villages for Greek refugees.

Besides his special commissions under the League, Nansen was always busy in the Assembly, where he was delegate from Norway. He never failed to speak for the weak or the oppressed, until the delegates used to say to each other when

each Assembly opened: "Let us hope Nansen has not discovered another small nation since last time." When Italy in 1923 tried to take Corfu from Greece, Nansen stood before the Assembly and attacked Mussolini so boldly that the chairman ruled him out on a point of order. It was something that had never before happened in the Assembly, although many strong speeches had been made from that platform since the first session opened. Nansen said quietly: "I could say more; my conscience would not let me say less." With Lord Cecil, the British member of the Council, he united the opposition to Mussolini, drew the small nations together, and fired them with his own indignation, until he forced the League to intervene and save Corfu for Greece.

He was greatly disturbed because Germany, Russia, and the United States were not in the League, and was the one who did most to bring in Germany in 1926. He fought vigorously to keep the "mandates" from becoming merely colonies of the powers pledged to protect them. He believed in the World Court and supported every effort to strengthen it. He took up the cause of native races in colonies where "forced labor" was rapidly becoming real slavery.

He fought long and earnestly to persuade the League to make a loan to the remnant of the Armenians left after the Turkish massacres, to help them develop irrigated areas in the deserts where they might be safe from the Turks. He even resigned his office of High Commissioner for Refugees when the League voted down his plan. The League would not accept his resignation, but neither would it help the Armenians. It was Russia again that was the stumbling block. When the



Turks drove the Armenians into the desert to die, the handful who escaped found their way to Erivan, were aided by the Russian government, and later were taken into the Soviet Union as one of its republics. No other nation in Europe had lifted a finger to help them, but because they had accepted help from Russia, they were beyond any aid from the League. Nansen liked them, admired their courage, and found help for them from other sources, but he could not move the League in their behalf.

All these undertakings of his were not just the haphazard activities of a generous and sympathetic man; they were all important parts of his vision for the future of the League of Nations in world affairs; through them he was trying to build the League nearer to his dream of a "new ship on a new course," carrying mankind to some far-off port of brotherhood and peace. He saw that politics and diplomacy had only plunged the world in misery; that disarmament conferences never disarmed anyone—"Disarmament of the mind is more important than disarmament of the nations," he said—that what the world needed was honest good will and helpfulness among men, and that the League could best open the way for that.

The years went by so very fast, crowded with so many demands on his strength and his sympathy, that he had no time to rest. The desks at Polhogda were always heaped with work; there was always a lecture tour here, or an investigation there, or a meeting of the League at Geneva. He was always looking toward the time when he could turn back to the quiet joys of science, or the keen thrills of exploration.

Russia planned a great expedition by dirigible over the arctic ice to map Spitsbergen and Franz Josef Land, and perhaps to sail over the Pole, and had asked Nansen to be its leader. And there was so much to be learned about the ocean, and other men were carrying on the research while he struggled year in and year out to create a new spirit of peace and brotherhood in war-sick Europe.

There was a grandchild running about and in and out the house now, another Eva, who knew a great statesman only as a gay and gentle playmate, one who could tell dozens of fairy tales or make an entrancing game out of the simplest walk in the woods.

He was past sixty, past sixty-five, he was almost seventy. When most men lay down their heaviest work and go a little slower, he was carrying his greatest burdens—responsibility for millions of lives, for millions of dollars; criticism and complaint if everything did not work out to everybody's pleasure; and bitter opposition to things he thought of the greatest importance. He had given up the quiet, happy, eventful life he loved, and the science he had been following since his boyhood, for tasks that seemed at times almost certain to fail.

He had no time for vacations in the mountains, for quiet days by the mountain lake. There was no more time for grouse-hunting or fishing, for jolly nights with friends around the campfire, for skiing trips in winter. When he was fifty-five, he had repeated the ski trip to Bergen over the Hallingskeid and Vossevangen, and said he would do it again in 1931 when he was seventy. But his strength was waning; the

burdens on his heart and mind had been too great, and he was growing very tired. In January 1930 he went on a short skiing jaunt with friends, a very short trip, such as he could have made when he was a boy, such a trip as he had often made with these same friends when he had forged ahead, setting a pace that left them breathless far behind him. This time he could not lead; he dropped behind, so far behind that he was lost to sight, and his companions turned back to look for him. They found him, by a little grove of birches, leaning on his staff and breathing heavily. He could go no farther.

He was seriously ill the rest of the winter, too ill to think of his work, or even to see many people, but even then no one realized the end was so near. As spring came, the Norwegian spring he loved so well, with freshening green in birch and linden, and songbirds journeying north again, he seemed better; he was up and about the house and beginning to catch up the threads of the tasks he had laid down for so many weeks. And then one sunny May afternoon he sat for a while on the veranda, looking out on the garden and fjord. His daughter-in-law found him there, his head bowed on his breast, his great heart still.

One more last journey; a solemn passing to the strains of a funeral march through silent, mourning throngs along the streets of Oslo, the streets where he had raced and laughed and pommeled his way as a school boy, the streets that had known his swinging stride as student, teacher, statesman, the streets that had echoed with shouts of welcome for the return of the triumphant explorer, the streets of his own city, where he had been both loved and honored. They were draped

with black, those streets, that seventeenth of May 1930, shadowed with drooping flags, and crowded with a sad and silent throng that could scarcely believe, even when they saw his casket pass, that Fridtjof Nansen had gone forth on his last journey.

His life was a patchwork, some people said; it had no plan, no direction; it followed only sudden impulses. He was scientist, then explorer, scientist again, and lastly statesman. Possibly there was no plan, but certainly there was a purpose in Fridtjof Nansen's life, something within him that urged him always to use all the powers he had, and to use them worthily. If he seemed to change his course, it was in every case to do a greater thing, not a smaller. He grew steadily and surely from an impulsive, self-willed boy to a courageous, wise, and deeply human man. As his powers grew, he used them for ever larger work, and the last ten years of his life were the giant's years he had sighed for as a boy. He was faithful to something more commanding than any neat, small chart of a ready-made career; he obeyed the law of his own expanding life.

He had high dreams; he failed sometimes, but his failures were greater than most men's successes. He left great tasks unfinished for other high-hearted dreamers to complete. It is true that the great days of exploration are over; the last continent, the last ocean have been discovered; there are only a few places left on the globe where any explorer can say: "I am the first to see this place," but there seem to be no boundaries or dimensions to the other worlds in which Fridtjof Nansen helped blaze pathways, the world of science

and the world of international brotherhood. Test tube, and microscope, and telescope daily disclose new continents and oceans of knowledge, and beyond each new discovery rise the shining peaks of still more unknown lands. But the hardest journey, Fridtjof Nansen's last quest, to find a road to peace among nations, to "honest good will" and "love and mercy," still waits for dauntless young explorers. Perhaps there is a surer way than through the League of Nations. He would be the first to say: "Turn about" if he thought another road was better; but if he saw no other road, he would never retreat, but would push forward, saying: "There is always a way to do the thing that must be done."

He was a great man; he will seem greater when men who made more noise in his day have been forgotten, and the world has had time to look back and see how high he towers above his times. He rescued helpless thousands from certain death, he gave hope and courage and opportunity to thousands more who wandered fearful, despairing, and forsaken in a hostile world, and he did it not alone out of pity for suffering, but also out of a dream that hatred could be overcome with brotherliness, and that a day could come when there should be no more war.

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NANSEN

By Anna Gertrude Hall

Illustrated by
Boris Artzybasheff

About the Illustrations:

As a boy, there was one book which Boris Artzybasheff treasured above all others, and which he read and reread until it was literally worn out from reading. This book was Nansen's *Farthest North, being the record of a voyage of exploration of the ship Fram 1893-96 and of a fifteen months' sleigh journey by the author and Lieutenant Johansen.*

Now Mr. Artzybasheff illustrates a book about this boyhood hero, Fridtjof Nansen. The illustrations of the Arctic expeditions are brilliant with the clearness and coldness of the northern climate which the artist, who grew up in Russia, knew so well himself.

To know how deeply Boris Artzybasheff has studied and understood and respected the man, one need only examine the two portraits which he has made: Nansen the young man (page 10), vital, idealistic, fearless, keen, with all his plans and hopes ahead; and Nansen the older man (page 160), his life nearly over, worn from physical hardships and sorrow and fighting, his fearlessness and idealism and all the fine qualities of the young man still there, but deeper, subtler, mellowed.

NANSEN

BY ANNA GERTRUDE HALL



He had high dreams; he failed sometimes, but his failures were greater than most men's successes. He left great tasks unfinished for other highhearted dreamers to complete. It is true that the great days of exploration are over; the last continent, the last ocean has been discovered; there are only a few places left on the globe where any explorer can say: 'I am the first to see this place,' but there seem to be no boundaries or dimensions to the other worlds in which Fridtjof Nansen helped blaze pathways, the world of science and the world of international brotherhood. Test tube, and microscope, and telescope daily disclose new continents and oceans of knowledge, and beyond each new discovery rise the glistening peaks of still more unknown lands. But the hardest journey, Fridtjof Nansen's last quest, to find a road to peace among nations, to 'honest good will' and 'love and mercy,' still waits for dauntless young explorers. Perhaps there is a surer way than through the League of Nations. He would be the first to say: 'Turn about' if he thought another road was better; but if he saw no other road, he would never retreat, but would push forward, saying: 'There is always a way to do the thing that must be done.'"

—From the book.

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